ROSIE PEREZ GETS OFF IN OUR SPECIAL YEAR END DOUBLE ISSUE

The year in R&B and rap

Jodeci: the untold scandal

It's not easy being Queen Latifah

Scarface meets Babyface

Jamaican gigolo

Charlie Brown's house

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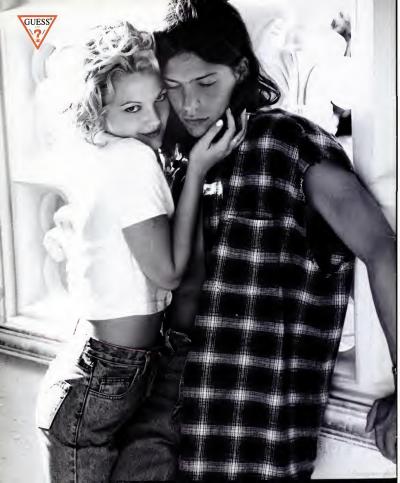
Eazy-E trashes Dr. Dre Madonna's

girl Me'Shell Heather

Heather Hunter sings

Sandra Bernhard and Paul Mooney hate you

Kids R Us: fashion robs the cradle









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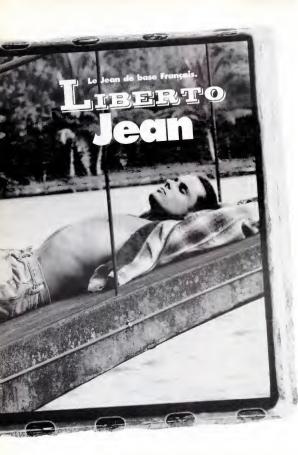
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Rose Perez photographed October 1993 by Christian Wilkin. Shyling by John Pallmino/Butler-Reghant. Hair by Dionne Alexander. Makeup by Susan Hauser/Butler-Reghant. Top by Carole Maloney. Vest by Todd Olshem. Earrings by Richard Stout. Lett' Top by Shane Jacobs, NYO. See "The Details."

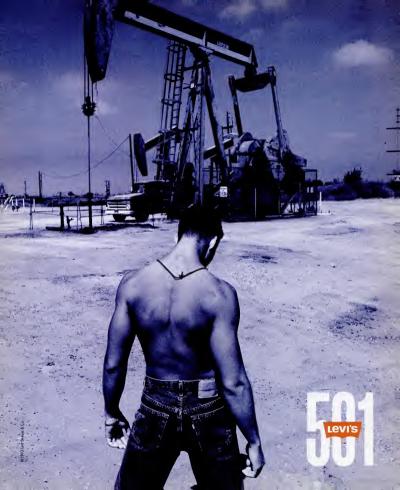
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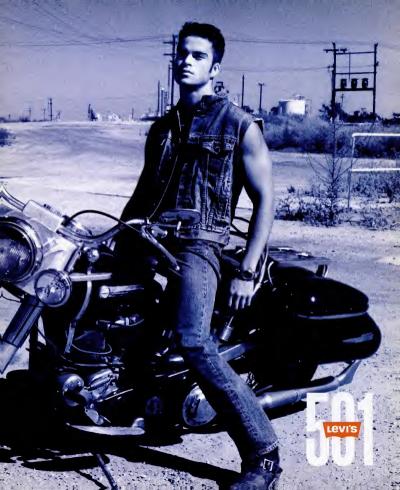
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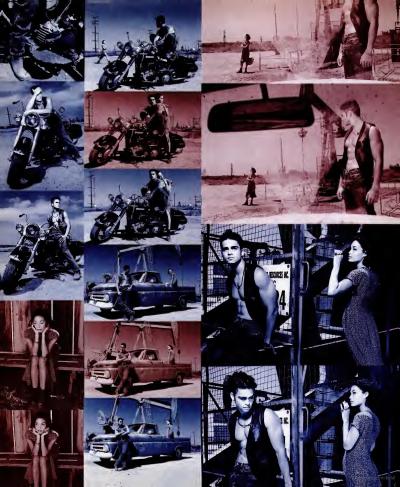














the beginning there was funk. in the end there was George Clinton The New Funk Bible Park Cassettes

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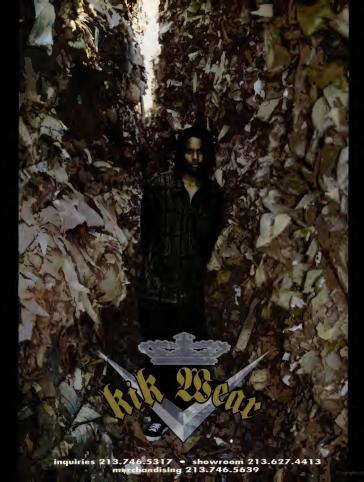
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# JODECI







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You're Always On My Min

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ON THE RCA RECORDS LABEL - CASSETTES AND COMPACT DISCS

#### CONTRIBUTORS

#### Mim Udovitch

Cultural critic Mim Udovitch, who interviewed Rosic Perez in this issue ("I, Latina," page 64), says that, though she liked Rosic ("because she complimented me on my sweater"), the two women don't really have much in common—except for the odd fact that "weboth have our 'Ys' tuned constantly to either The Box or the Discovery Chantel. Rosic likes

New York and contributes frequently to Details, The Village Voice, and Rolling Stone.

#### Butch Belair

Thirty-two-year-old Butch Belair says he enjoyed photographing the skateboarders for "This Year's Model" (page 95) because the subjects were just kids off the street. "They weren't exactly models," says Belair, "and that's nice because they weren't stuck in their little poses and routines." Belair has been a photographer for three years, and a photographer's assistant since dinosaurs walked the earth." He has contributed to French Glamour, Interview. Rolling Stone, Creem, Spin, US, and Sassy.

Stephane Sednaoui

French photographer Stephane Sednaoui, who shot Queen Latifah ("It's Not Easy Being Queen," page 118), says he rarely photographs people he doesn't like-because he's afraid he might try to make them look ugly. That wasn't a problem with Latifah. "I love her and I like her music very much: she's easy, sweet. and casual-just the way I imagined her." Sednaoui, who says he's been inspired in every way by "the universe of Jean-Paul Gaultier," has directed TV commercials and videos, including Madonna's "Fever" clip as well as videos for the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Smashing Pumpkins. and P.M. Dawn, Sednaoui has also contributed to Interview. Mademoiselle, Details, The New York Times Magazine, Vogue Hommes International Mode. French Glamour, and The Face.

#### Lucy Kaylin

Lucy Kaylin, who wrore "It's Nor Easy Being Queen" (ngge 118), says she was struck by how deeply Queen Latifah was affected by her brother's death. "The tragedy is never really far away from Latifah's mind," says Kaylin. "I felt that the whole time! was withher." But given all this, she says, "it's amazing how intense, capable, taming, and poised she is.

And you have to constantly remind yourself that she's only 23." Kaylin is the senior writer at GQ where she covers the entertainment and media industries. She lives in New York City.

#### Dah Len

Taiwan-born photographer Dah Len says his pictures of androgynes for the fashion feature, "This Year's Model" (page 95), were inspired in part by his obsession with David Bowie (which made a "Ziggy Stardust effect come into play"), and in part by the current waif craze. "It's basically a dream," says Len. "It could be a good dream or a bad one." Although he studied architecture at UC Berkeley, Len began taking photographs as a hobby when he was 16. He now lives in New York City and has shot album covers for Debbie Gibson. Levert, Debbie Harry, the Winans, and Lady Miss Kier

Tom Sinclair Vibecontributor Tom Sinclair says Iodeci ("Guns and Roses," page 86) are, quite simply, good kids gone wrong. "They're country boys who came to New York and became hypnotized by the glamor of the city and the music industry," says Sinclair. "It was the hardest piece I've ever had to write" because the R&B bad boys were so difficult to pin down. Sinclair, who writes frequently about alternative music and guitar rock, was born and raised in Washington Heights in Manhattan, and has contributed pieces to The Village Voice, Rolling Stone, Spin, and Entertainment Weekly.



#### Christmas Interpretations



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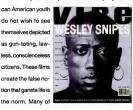


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I commend Wesley Snipes ["The Trouble With Wesley." Danvel Smith, Octoberl, He's a successful African American actor who bravely critiques what is becoming a tiresome trend in African American filmmaking. His commentary reflects my belief that the majority of Afri-

can American youth do not wish to see themselves depicted as gun-toting, lawless, conscienceless citizens. These films create the false notion that gansta life is



the filmmakers are taking the easy way out of the complicated challenge of creating solutions. It is ludicrous to think that crime, homophobia, misogyny, and other forms of hate are all that we're able to produce for the African American audience, Regressing to the Superfly era only assists whites in perpetuating the negative images of our community that some thrive upon. Life and its prospects are far more interesting than death and its finality. It is our job as consumers of this barrage of negative imagery to challenge our young artists to COME out of the dark. DESIREE Y. BARBER, BRONX, NY CABLOS A. BATTS. REISTERSTOWN, MD

Wesley, what the fuck are you talking about? I haven't heard a load of tired crap like that about the black women/white women thing in a long time. Were you trying to tell us something, brother Wesley? That you're tipping with a white woman and the supposed majority of us "demanding" sisters should be understanding of that? Well, if that's the case, you can forget it. I'd respect you more if you were just above board and said something like. "I just want to date white women," or "Some brothers who date white women just do it because they want to." But don't try to sugarcoat it with a bunch of stereotypes and generalizations about sisters and white women to assuage your own insecurities and/or guilt feelings. It behooves a brother like you, Wesley, who is purportedly so enlightened on the race tip, to gain some knowledge on the woman tip, 'cause right now, your ass is lacking. Now, get on your little bike and ride Banton types who expound their antigav that! P.S. You were right about one thing: Larry Fishburne is a better actor than you. SABRINA MILLER, CLEARWATER, FL

your mother forbade you to havesweet and dangerously addictive. He's got the hardness of the Boogle Down and the self-awareness that all African American men and women should have. What more could you ask for in a brother? Though I believe only New York could cradle and nurture him correctly, La-La Land definitely needs a Wesley Snipes and lots more like him, ROBIN MITCHELL, HARLEM, NY

In her article on Buiu Banton I"No Apologies, No Regrets," October), Joan Morgan helps us explore the man and the homophobia that plaques and consumes him. We discover how ignorant myths fed to him as a child have reinforced his narrow-minded views about homosexuals. As a young man born and bred in Jamaica, I can attest that the island is full of Buju doctrine on the convenient but often false

premise of religious beliefs. What is use-Ahh, Wesley Spipes, the Hershey ful, however, about the controversy surrounding his music is that the hate is finally being bared for the world to examine and hopefully condemn. Buju Banton's success may have allowed his physical escape from the world of poverty, darkness, and ignorance. But he does not allow his "fans" to emancipate themselves from mental slavery (to paraphrase the words of Bob Marley, whose message is lightyears ahead of Buju Banton's). He, like those for whom he speaks, remains enslaved and hopelessly trapped. That is the real tragedy, WAYNE J. CHRISTIE, BROOKLYN, NY I was seriously considering subscribing to your magazine until I read Joan Morgan's gutless, politically correct diatribe bashing Buju Banton. I find it a sad day for black people when black men and black women begin to indulge in and condone homosexuality. I am proud of Buiu for sticking to his morals and standing up to the heterophobic powers that be in the media. VIBE, you are the future. Even though I loathe dancehall music, I plan on buying Buju's album to show my support for him, LISA HAMILTON, SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO

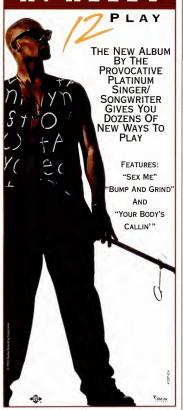
I get mixed feelings when I read Vibe. The October Issue had me smiling just looking at the beautiful picture of Wesley Snipes on the cover. Hmmm Then about 10 pages in, an advertisement reads 'White Men Can Jumpi" So, great, no raciel bles here. Then, three pages after, e white man is shown weering KKK garb [Start, "The Boys in the Hoods," by James Ledbetter]. That's a scery end unsettling sight, even to me, a white girl. Vibe has great articles, but get the ace and y'all ere quick to dis white folks. Does Vogue do that with African Thank you for the very beautiful "My Pinup" Americans, Aslans, or Spanish

(photographed by Darryl Turner, produced by Hilton Als. Octoberl. These are the kinds of moving pictures that we need to see: photographs of women who marry dreams of glamor, desire, and respect-from others, for ourselves, and for each other; projections of our pasts and futures; reminders of who's been left out, who's been included, and how. All of this allows us to love and criticize this history, and to hope for our future. LISA COHEN NEW YORK CITY erature. HOLLY AC

people? Why don't you stick to promoting unity and positivity emong the African American ace? When white people went to broaden their knowledge of other cultures, why slem their noses in it with angry articles? Opinions can be eye-opening, but dong, sove the bad telk for the ignorant people and let one race enjoy the next, I'm not asking this magazine to cater o my "white girl" needs. Just don't shove others' wrongdoing down our throats while we ere trying to enjoy hip hop lit-



### R. KELLY



Open Letter to Vibe: As lesbiens, gey men, and transgendered persons of African, Afro-American, Afro-Caribbean, end Afro-Latin descent, we were appalled by Joen Morgan's profile of Buju Banton, which seeks to legitimize homophobie on so-celled cultural grounds. Morgen cleims that she is trying to give a voice to those who have not been heard in the controversy surrounding Banton's gay-bashing hit "Boom Bye Bye." those she feels have a better understanding of Jamaican culture. We agree with Morgan that there is little effort made to understand the cultures of the diespora. What we vigorously reject is a definition of Black culture that excludes us. While Morgan's piece trots out every imaginable stereotype about Jameican gey men-that they are rapists, child molesters, that they are affluent end prey on working-class men, that their sexuel ectivities leed to dismemberment end deeth-it feils to quote e single openly gey Jamaican man in response. (Lesbians are apparently beneath notice.) Nor does Morgan heve an understanding of the dimension of homophobie within the diaspora. While there may be culturel sanction for antigay violence in Jemaica, Black lesbiens, gay men, bisexuels, and particularly transgendered persons have been murdered by homophobic, government-sanctioned death squads in Brazil and Colombia. Given Morgen's attitude, it's no surprise that she refuses to accept that we can or should act on our own behalf. Thus, our organizing efforts raise questions about our Bleckness and provoke slurs about our skin tone. Our successes inspire conspiracy theories about white, male "gay power." There are certainly white lesblans and gay men who support us in our efforts to confront homophobia in our own communities, but the decision of Vibe's editor-in-chief. Jonathan Van Meter, to publish so biased and defamatory a piece clearly illustrates that not all powerful, gay white men value or respect our lives. In conclusion, Morgen's premise-that homophobie is en integral part of Bleck culture-is as scurrilous as her conclusion, that those who shun music or musiciens who espouse homophobie do so out of recism or culturel insensitivity. And es frightening es we find Morgan's attitude, it strengthens us in our resolve to continue our fight, DIRGAAAB-RICHARDS, DEBORAH BEY JACQUIE BISHOP, CANDICE BOYCE, SHAWN BROWN, TED BROWN, MANDY CARTER THEOPHILIS P. CLARKE CATHY COHEN STEVEN CORRIN VONDORA CORZEN, ELIAS FARAJAJE GLEN FRANCIS SHARLERILOT, JOAN IS, JEWELLE GOMEZ, ADA GRIFFITH, LYLE ASHTON HARRIS, THOMAS HARRIS, REGGIE JACKSON, CARY ALAN SON, TAMARA JONES, REVEREND ZACHARY JONES, ISSAC JULIEN, NATHAN KERR, PEPPER LABELIA, SIMON NKOLL JOEY B. PRESSUEY, ROBERT REID-PHARR, MATTIE RICHARDSON, MARLON RIGGS, COLIN ROBINSON, ASSOTTO SAINT, SUZANNE SHENDY, SHEQUIDA, BARBARA SMITH, DONALD SUGGS, JOCELYN TAYLOR, KEVIN TAYLOR, FABIAN THANKS AT ICROMOST THESE TRUBES AND A VISTABLES WAS ABLE WAS USED OF CORDER WAYNE STOLEN WITH THANKS

Joan Morgan Responds: I stand firmly behind my October 1993 profile of Buju Banton. The piece does not, as the above signed heve stated, seek "to legitimize homophobia on so-called cultural grounds." It instead pleces Mr. Banton's homophoble in context by exemining the breeding ground of what is unfortunately a nationally andorsed disdein for homosexuality that frequently finds expression in hateful or violent acts. For the sake of clarification—not apology—the homophobic sentiments explored are not the opinions of either this writer or this magazine. As unpalatable as they are, however, they are frighteningly reel indications of the megnitude and pervesiveness of e homophobie that produces hundreds of songs like "Boom Bye Bye." They demend identification. exploration, and discussion. Your letter asks me implicitly to defend my interests in the culture of an international superster who is also homophobic. As a journalist and woman of color who has consistently explored the "isms" of many icons in hip hop culture, I am constantly confronted with extreordinarily telented bleck men whose ertistic expressions cause me e great deal of fear and pain. But I am rendered ebsolutely powerless if I respond reactively and demand that they be slienced. I listen avidly because only in exploring the sociel and political and cultural roots of any "ism" can one find the tools to dismantle these institutions. It is for these reasons that Buiu Benton belongs in the pages of Vibe. And if one day some racist, redneck rapper were to edvocate the death of black folks he or she should be written ebout here, too. And I'll be first in line to do the story.

First: Buju Banton's homophobic views are WACK. Second: A few words on the c ersy surrounding that Buiu Banton piece: A large part of the world shares Buiu's views on homosexuals. Doesn't make it right, but it also ain't right to condem those views without first attempting to understand them. Gaddit? UNDERSTAND

THE PROBLEM, then condamn it. VIBE encourages mail and photographs from readers. Please send letters to VIBE Mail, 205 Lexington Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10016. Send photos to VIBE Driveby Shooting (same address). Include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Photo submissions will become the property us to hear. Last: Buju's views are of VIBE and will not be returned. still WACK, Out.

Condemn the problem, then CHANGE IT. It's a process, ya dig? It's called thinking. Do readers want an opion handed to them? Or do they want to use the tools that Vibe gives them to make up their ow minds? Trust yoursalf to arrive at your own conclusions. Funny that The Village Voice doesn't know that problems don't go away who you ignora their causa. Third: So Vibe, keep on getting "the whole story." Not just the one THEY want

MR. BRINKLEY LIKKIN-STIK, BROOKLYN

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international up hop flavor for y'all to savor

Farce mc sulaar

12 slammin' tracks from across the globe



Congratulations.
You've made it.

WHAT'CHA GONNA DO?

Buy more clothes?

A new car?

More gym shoes?

WHAT'CHA GONNA DO?

Remember the neighborhood?

The teacher who wouldn't let you quit?

The coach who was on 24 hour call?

WHAT'CHA GONNA DO?

Donate sports equipment?

Picket a crack house?

Replace an old hoop at the park?

WHAT'CHA GONNA DO?

Feed the hungry?

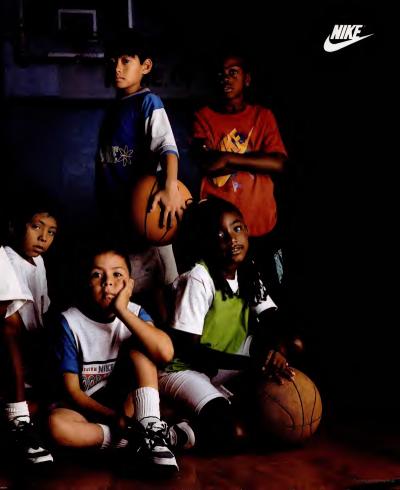
Help a kid study for the SAT?

Coach Boys & Girls Club games?

WHAT'CHA GONNA DO?

Just Do It.







## START

## TAZ FARDER TISEVEA

Filip on the box any timo any day and images of young black men -leces contorted and angy, brandshing puns both imaginary and real—fill the screen with urban angest and paranois. Horses like "Folan ingas" and "No sellout" and "The 'hood comes first" dominate the vaculusiry of rap, Who's real, who's fake? Who's really from the ghetto, and who's just visiting? It's hard to tell because every other black kid fand every white kid with a goate and a pimp limply wants to be down. And to be

down, says the rap biz, is to be hand.

Trouble is, those days the "harder" the artists act, the more successful they become;
from the ghets to the suburbs, harderer ap
is settling like crary. Record companies can"
set enough of the angests becape. And if it's
the "real nigges" who get the most loot, natucutily everybedy wants to be a real nigge. So,
does being hard man being set or don't it
of an existence of reality anymore—"I'u an aesthetic choice, a marketing decision. Call it
hardenes for each

1993 will be remembered as the year hip hop got hard, real hard—so hard that another one of our heroes, Snoop Doggy Dogg, is facing murder charges in California. Whether he had anything to do with the death in question is irrelevant here. What is relevant is that everybody she is sailvating like dags—before on the block and record exces alike. I knew Snoop was a real rigas, howls one group. This will help us self at least 2 million more records, pants the other. Fer all we know Snoop could be a cord-cerrying member of a local church who desant Know how to shoot any of those guns he's always being photographed with. And the stuff he may about? Who knows how much truth Snoop or anyone size is mouthing? And why does it matters a much?

Self-mythologicing has always been a part of pop music. Does Madronn roully have sex with all those guys (and giris)? Does Ozzy Obbourne bit of the heads of that when he's not onatage? Of course not. So why should rap artists be required to live up to their own myths? High bop and hyperbole go hand in hand. But the problem now, more then ever before, is that the lines between what is real and what is morely "studies work," as Smoot callet, have it is morely "studies work," as Smoot callet, have defense against its own demons, its awing grace. But this tyranny of hard has, in many cases, nothing to do with reality. Will precently received a letter from a record

exec in Beverly Hills who claimed that his company "discovered" Cordozar Brodus a.k.a. Snoop Doggy Dogg. "We knew he had great writing skills that would take him far as a rapper," the exec writes, "However,...we did not agree with the type of image he wanted to portray....I personally spent a lot of time with him, and a gangster he was not." No one besides Snoop himself can say who he really is, least of all a record exec who once held the keys to a young rapper's future. Whether you believe this letter or not, the fact remains that all entertainers have to make choices about the image they sell. And what ere the implications when the most popular and most respected image on the street is the "real nigga" with a gat, a 40, and a blunt—the mythic renegade outlaw that is fast becoming its own conformist trap? Just for the record, understand this: It's real if you've lived it, not if you've heard about it. Real does not mean hard. Soft as they seem. P.M. Dawn might be real within their own reality. Onyx-hard as they may seem-might not be. Watch enough music videos and you can make your idea of hard sound real, but it won't mean jack. As any real G knows, the only thing hard about being hard are the bodies hitting

the concrete.





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KRIS KROSS

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Let-Mack American) 462-200

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Soundtrack, When I Fel etc. (Epic Soundtrax) I Fell In Love; 458-430

"The Bodyguard"—Original Soundtrack. Run 7o You; many others. (Arista) 448-159

Gospel

Frank Williams

Dr. Jonathan Greer & The Cathedral Feith

Sounds Of Blackness

The Night Before
Christmas (Perspective)

Miselesippi Mase Choir—It Remeins To Be Seen (Malaco) 463-984



Bsbyface—For The Cool In You. Title cut. When Can I See You, others. (Epic) 464-222

Aretha Franklin-Aret Gospel (Chess) 429-0

Sounde Of Blackness

Gospel (A&M) 427-161

Daryt Coley—When The Mississippi Mose Choir—God Gets The Glory (Malsco) 430-116

452-557 452-524 (Cepitol) 423-131 e-Love 419-00

M.C. Hammer—Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em (Capitol) 403-477

Christopher Williams—Shal—II I Ever Fall In Changes (Uprown/MCA) Love (Gasoline Aller) Sndtric (Wat Disney 463\*480 MCA) 453\*434 Records) 453\*167 The Best Of The Chiffons (3C Recr Bobby Brown Dancel The Essen Vol. 1 (
MCA) Basis Vol. 1 (
402-602 Jazz Meet ) The Essential Count Basic Vol. I (Columbia

357+756

(MCA) Brown Bobby

461-434

ishop Jeff Benks And he Revivel—He'e All ver Me (Savoy/ laleco) 466-052 The Best Of Roberts Flack (Allantic) 3114951

The Best Of Earth, Wind & Fire, Vol. 1 (Columbie /ARC) 290-9 evia Wonder—S The Key Of Life Dennis Auetin—Do You Know Him? (Word Epic) 485-260 The Mighty Clouds Of Joy—Memory Lane 269-217/399-212 Terence Trent D'Arby
Symphony Or Denn

Joy Men. ... 465-use
Randy Crewford—
Through The Eyes Of
Love (Warner Bros.)
436-832 Alyson Willame (OBR/ Columbie) 435-790 Chic—Dence, Dance, Dence(Atlantic) 431-791 Babyface A Closer Look (Solar/Epic) 431+148 448-605 Jade-Jede To The Max (Giant/Reprise) 453-068 Kool & The Geng-Unite (JRS Records) 459-578 444-471

> Ad Ch

Pebbles—Always (MCA) 412-163 TLC-Oor (LaFace) rien McKnight
Mercury) 442-235
Weckx-N-Effect Hard
Or Smooth (MCA)
448-116 Sade—Love Deluxe
(Epic) 449-439
"Posse"—Ontinal

Bebe & Cece Winene (Capeol) 456-079 The Five Blind Boys Of Alebams—Deep River uch) 453-761 Just An Illusion 442-251 Peula Abdul-Spell- Nejee bound (Virgin) 420-257 (EMI) e-What's 445-197 MUNI A34-621 John Coltrane — Giant Steps (Atlantic) 371-591 Kenny G Live (Arista) 401-505

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Sone Of Soul. Their newest album starts off with the hit I Had No Loot, and includes My Ex-Girthend, Tell Me Mama: Leavin': Slow Wine, 15 has in all (Mercury) 423-679

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#### Things we throw away

Do you ever wonder why things cost so much? Take CDs, for example. With mass production, a single compact disc (including packaging, art, etc.) can be produced for less than \$2. The rest of your \$14.99 purchase price goes for other stuff-shipping, salaries, trashed hotel rooms. And, of course, special treats. These treats are supposed to get the attention of the press, maybe help generate some publicity, or just create a "buzz," That must have been what the deathcore band Sacred Reich were thinking last year when they sent out bongs to music-magazine editors. (Note to publicists: We can't use them in the office!) Among the other promo-trinkets we trash in the course of a day: vibrators, rubber vomit, Cypress Hill peel 'n' stick tattoos, Naughty by Nature condoms on a stick, Rick Rubin's Def American label (back before they dissed the word "def") sent out hard plastic daggers, or "executive letter openers." promising that they could be carried through airport security. Tha Alkaholiks, a surpris-Ingly appealing West Coast rap trio, sent barf bags emblazoned with their logo (a guy hunched over a toilet). Inside the bags were a toothbrush and paste, aspirin, Alka-Seltzer, and other hangover helpers. What ever happened to CDs and T-shirts? Music companies aren't the only ones: Hollywood has raised promo-eroticism to an art. This year alone, movie publicists have sent us everything we never wanted-from potted plants to pot paraphemalia to stuffed pink pigs. (Gramercy Pictures deserves special mention for filling the most editorial wastebaskets in 1993.) Here's an idea: Instead of complaining about bootlegs and declining ticket sales, what if the entertainment industry cut back on some of the promonubbish and lowered their prices? Of course then we wouldn't have gotten that cool towel compressed under 10 tons of pressure to the size of a hockey puck. (Just add water and stand back!) Never mind.

#### **bullets**

GRAF STORE STING The graffiti writing crew (end rap group) Lords of Brooklyn got tired of being chosed by cops for bombing trains, so they've set up their own subway car in a Brooklyn storefront. BMT Lines is the name of their shop, which is filled with authentic subway accoutrements purchased legally, in case you were wo et city auctions—from the R-train logo on the sign out front to the straps hanging from the ceiling. In fact, if it weren't for ell the T-shirts, cap (both for your head and for spraypaint), and oth-



er urban graf gear on sale inside, you might think you'd just hopped a turnstile. For en unw d touch of euthenticity, plainclothes NYPD detectives have been frequenting the store—wh they tend to stick out like sore thumbs-in hopes of finding something illegal on sale. They've even searched the bags of customers, but so fer, no errests.

"DEATH" OF HIP HOP FASHION The fashion megs seem to be confused. Hip hop is not a look; it's a culture. Seers's decision to carry e "hip hop clothing" line celled "Urben Images" prompted @@ magazine to issue the following obit in its November Issue: "By the power vested in us by ourselves es supreme judges of all things sertorial, we declare the hip-hop feshion trend henceforth and forevermore dead." (Guess the folks at GQ buy their Carhartt jackets et boutiques, but we elways got 'em cheeper et Seers.) Similer proclamations heve been spotted in feshion tredes WWD (Women's Wear Daily) end DNR (Daily News Record). Before the fashion police go dancing on any greves perhaps they should be reminded that Seventh Avenue slept on ghetto fleves for elmost 13 years, during which time hip hop feshion did just fine, thank you. Trends, not cultures, get issued death certificates.

FELLAS, TAKE ME TO THE BRIDGE The fect that Steemboot Springs, Colorado—of ell places—should decide to dedicate e bridge to the Godfether of Soul is weird enough. That the town decided to call it the Jemes Brown Soul Center of the Universe Bridge is downright disturbing, especially since J.B. had never been to Steamboat Springs before he showed up for the dedication. But the unauthorized merchandise that has spilled forth since the bridge was opened last September—James Brown Ale, James Brow Roast coffee, and James Brownies - must have him wishing he'd never set foot in Colorado.

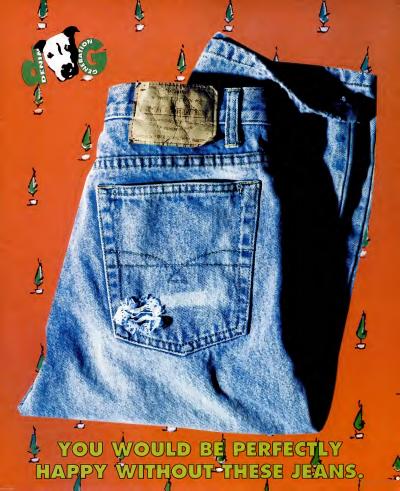


DJ DARYL Since resigning in disgrace after the Los Angeles riots, former LAPD chief Daryl Getes is pay ing the rent by writing a book, giving public appearances, and hosting a cellin talk show on L.A.'s KFI AM 640. The racially retarded, peramilitary style he ight to his police work seems to have spilled over into his telecon ations career. Here are some of the witty promotional spots for his radio show: "Hey Chief, what's with that beeper you're weering? What, ere you deeling on the side or something? It's the Chief, Daryl Gotes, on KFI." And: "It's more fun for gang members than a drive-by. It's the Chief, Daryl Gates." Couldn't you just die laughing? Kind of makes you nostalgic for that old song "Shoot the DJ."

THANKS FOR SHARING Sister Ruth of the Pointer Sisters wants the world to know: She's a mom egain. The Pointers are celebrating their 20th year together in the music business—they're even getting a star on Hollywood Boulevard next month, But 47-year-old Ruth, who is elready a grandmother, has two more reasons to celebrate: She gave birth to twins All end Conor this year efter ertificial insemination. SBK, the Pointers' current label, seized the opportunity to promote their new elbum, Only Sisters Can Do That, end issued e press release wherein Ruth explained her reesons for taking e stab et motherhood one more time: "Because it's 1993, and I can." You go, grand

RAP DN TRIAL (ASAIN) Merk your celenders now for what's sure to turn into the biggest media circus since Ice-T's "Cop Killer." Rap will go on triel for murder in a Texas court next October. It all started when Houston teenager Ronald Ray Howard stole e car and then fatally shot Texas State Trooper Bill David after being stopped for a broken headlight. Howard's defense attorney argued that the 2Pac tape in the car stereo—which includes lyrics about shooting police—encouraged him to pull the trigger. While the jury ecknowledged tha the music may have had some influence, they still sentenced Howard to die by lethal injection. Now the widow of the trooper is preparing to sue 2Pec, Interscope Records, EestWest Records Americe, Atlentic Recording Company, end Time Werner, Inc. At Issue is the responsibility of musicion and record companies for the actions of listeners. And who might be the widow's star witness? Death row inmete Ronald Ray Howard.









## JAMAL-SKI THE BEADMASTER

nd you, this is not a fashion thing: For Ski and partners Cormac (the Medaliion fire, water, metal, wood, earth—into a Bead. [Ed ah (the Bendical Alchemist), note: The end result looks kind of like Play-Doh.]

AL: Pertaining to the consciousness senger (see OED). One who prays "I'd go into clubs with strands for the soul or spiritual welfare of another.

#### Those T.I.R.E.D. acronyms

hy Mimi Valdés

RDB/Rossia Down Productions) was seed and VDC One (Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone) was even cooler NWA (Niggaz With Attitude) was done too We could even get with EPMD (Erick and Parrish Making Dollars), and De La's D.A.LS.Y. Age (Da Inner Sound Y'all). Once initials were part of the fame-through-anonymity of brothas livin' underground. Now initials are becoming a bit T I B E D -a lazy way to say too much and too little The worst are the ones with "profound" hidden meanings, to say nothing of the N2DEEP's, and II D Extreme's. A trip to the record store is looking more and more like a game of Scrabble. You be the judge:

(Experience Unlimited) ---(Sisters With Voices) CIANI TIC (T-Boz. Left Eve. & Chilli) INTERO (Innovative New Talent Reaching Out) TRIBI (Too Bad To Be True) (Radd Boyz of the Industry)

BROTI LIMIN (Universal Nubian Voices) T.C.F. Crew (The Chosen Few) NIVOL (Naughty Kreations R Unified) SSI (Smokin' Suckaz Wit' Logic) (Point of View) POV

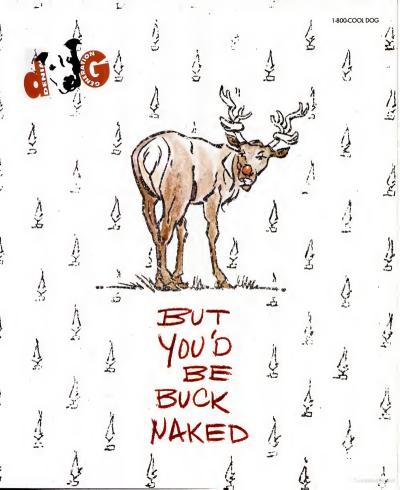
Get Set V O P (Voice of the Projects) F.Y.C. (Express Yourself Clearly) DDV (Reality Born Unknown) DBC'T (Dank, Brew and Guns) LIGK'S (Underground Kings) ANG (Ain't No Gains)

OFTE (Operation From the Bottom) SED (Six Feet Deep) Boo-Yaa T B LB F (Too Bount International

Boo-Yaa Empire) Yaggfu Front You Are Gonna Get Fucked I In (If Youl Front) (Another Latin Timebomb)

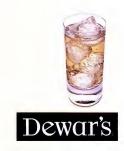
The B.R.O.T.H.A. Chilly-T (Black Realist Out To Have Assets)

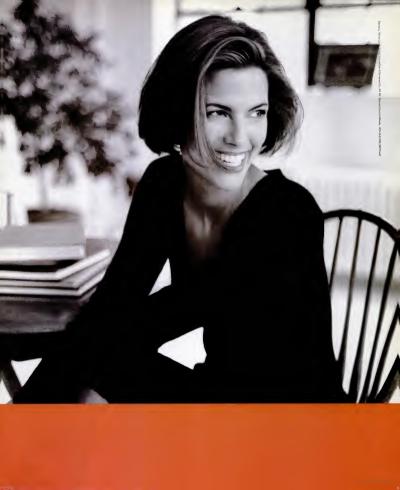




OK, she's finally coming over for dinner.

What are you gonna offer her, a nice cold one?





## TA



#### FACE II FACE

#### Babylace Meets Scarlace

Their names say it ell: Scarface, the hardcore gangsta rapper behind the Geto Boys' 1991 hit "Mind Playing Tricks Geto Boys' 1991 int "Mind Playing I next On Me" end his own expertiy graphic solo debut; Babyface, the romantic R&B superstar with infallible songwriting and producing instincts responsible, in part, for hit songs by Bobby Brown, Whitney ouston, Boyz II Men. TLC, end others. Both released second solo elbume this past fell, which shot to the number one and two spots on the Billboard R&B ums chart. Both have their own abels and era poised to break out of th adows of their former groups. But while one croons in satiny pop songs sed manic depressive, raps with unflinching precision about blowing brains and, in more tender mo blowiobs. What could the two of ther possibly heve to talk about? We'll soon find out, es Nathaniel Wice gets them face to face (on the phone).

Scarface, Meet Babyface; Babyface, Meet Scarface

VIBE: Have you two ever spr ce: Nah, what's up, Fece? Hey, how you doin'? S: All right. Man, I got to say straight up: Bahylaca yayıda ehit bahy I'm talkina shout from way back with Ivour former out from way back wi

Banaj i ne Deele, nigga. Bi How old are vou man? - 00 See, I'm an old one—35.

Heb. beb. beb. We grew up on on men, men, nen. we grew up on Babyface. All I got to do is put vour disc in when I'm ridin' and it's good.

It's You just making me older now.

As As old as black peoper.

The Down

\$: Oh, man, num .... your disc. That acquatical quitar so

is the hum man Br What's that now? 8: "When Can I See You." That's ell I play, ned at seven when I hought it.

NOh. I didn't know whether anyone was really gonna like that.

ma like that. l: I didn't know you played quitar.

trough. 8: Yeah man, I been dom snacom pick I was a little kid. Since I was five, I pick up o guitar—party with Jimi Hendrix. up e guitar—party with Jimi Hendrix.

B: That wee my main instrument, you know. That's what I started off with.

S: Were you influenced by Jimi Hendrix

D. M. 8: I was. I ain't gonna lie, men.
I wanted to be e rock & roll singer

when I was little. N: You know. I kind of fought him. With me, when I was growing up, everyone
was tryin' to get me into him, and ther

get me to smoke some weed end stuff. And I was against it. Someone told me that I would never understand his uniess I smoked weed, so I guess I nev understood 'im. But I just picked up his

St He was before his time, man.

cool now, though. S: You know what I want, man? Put me together an acoustical guitar piece? Let me sample that! 'Cause that's what I'm

B: Like what? S: Like "When Can I See You." I'm telling you man, people in this rap world, they don't open their minds up end use their ideas. You know what I'm saying? You know how everybody

comin' out with da upright bass sound Nobody came out with this acoustical sound, Nobody.

B: Yeah, you're right. I love the intro of your record. Whatever that is. St I think that's Bill Withers.

It is it really? S: I wesn't really expecting you to get off on my shit.

B: I grabbed your record and listened to it. It's jamming. I like what feels good. It ein't really so much about what it says. And that's true in any kind of music; ell thet matters is that it feels good.

Love and Marriage 1: Hey, didn't you just get merried, dude? I got to congratulate you on thet. B: Yeah, thenks.

ti's not Toni Braxton is it? B: Nah.

S: Because that would have been e fight, boy. I would have had to fight you over Tool

B: She's still single s to che? Well tell her I'm eligible H's all good

Nothin' but the Funk [Noises at Scarface's end. Someone has walked into the room.]

\$\text{\$\text{Yof I'm on the phone with Babyface.}}

nigga. [in background: "For real?"] That nigga live, too. B: So you, um...

& He on the phone cursing end shit. [Heavy laughter that slowly sputters down.] What was you saying? B: Do you do straight-up R&B?

St I haven't, but you give me your n i wanna fuck with it all. I'm starting a funk band, you know what I'm saving? I ha musicians I keet took up a heat and started playing something on the base and they just come in and we record that shit. [15 minutes of mutual Bootsy

Collins end P-Funk eppreciation ensues. I I'm bringing it back out here though, I had a show from 9 to 10 on the in Strictly for the Funk Lovers I didn't play nothin' but the funk, for the whole hour. Just showin' every-

hody where the shit came from Clothes Make the Man VIBE: Scarface, your clothes are unique for e rapper.

8: Hell, yes. You gotta kee up that image. That's why I wear my suits. But Babyface, Lean't fuck with you. You he having people make that shit for you.

B: [Pretending to sound degressed.]] tta go buy my shit in the store.

What you into? I fuck wit' that Hugo Boss an' Barbara Bates. B: I go with Versace, Thierry Mugler...

B: How 'bout alligators? Ye'll probably
don't fuck with them out there.

Yeah, I don't put it on. s [Laughing] He talkin' bout he don't put it on. But clothes are important. I don't want to be just a gangsta with Tshirts and baseball caps. If you really ma be the Capone of rap, man, you notta dress it. It's the same onstage. You can't just go out there end scratch on the turntables. You got to entertain. E Sounds like you got the role down,

the rapper with class.
[Click. Babyface excuses his check his call weiting.] VIBE: Forget the acoustic sam

you should get him to write a love song for you & No. man. He'll cherge me en erm and a lea

Give Them What They Want VIBE: People out there buying records sometimes seem to go fo the opposite of what they have in their lives. People with enough noise in their lives went something smootl people with soft lives might want ething hard. This is how I look et it, for my musi

Prins is how I look et it, for my music. At some point every person is going to either be in love or meke love. [Scarface eiggles, then breaks into e hearty laugh.] There's elweys gotta be some music for that. Also, though, nobody should listen to the same thing oil the time. 8: Why would I went to just limit myself to one side of the football field when I can cover the whole thing?

B: That's cool, Have you done any R&B in B: That's cool. Mave you done any new the studio, just messin' around? \$1 did one song, men. [Laughter, ] | did en R&B song! it was jammin', too. I ain't tvin'. It didn't sound like Teddy Riley's shit but it was cool I want to not off an'

do that slow somethin' to ride to me Like the acoustics in that song-drop something heavy behind that shit and it's over. You specialize in selling it's over. You specialize in selling records to the people who make is man; I specialize in selling records to the people who like the massive booms. It Well, we should hook up. I'll definitely out somethin' together for you. That'd be

cool. 8; Hey, man, you'ra e cool dude. You ain't like them old bourgeois-ass R&B niggas that be walking with their nose all stuck up, man. You down, man. Hey, Nat, make sure you put that in the mac. man: Robyface is The Shit. (Rabylace and Scarface exchange plu

~mbers.1 S: Nat, man, that's my own number. If you print that





(Fill in the fighting word of your choice.)

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later, Snoop will face murder charges—but now, everything's n

to the music and morph into the star's face.



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# STIHONA STIHONA PROFITS FUTURE PROPERTS FUTURE

TRUMUNE STAINED BY THE SUBSPICE DEVILE TOUS THE SUBSPICE OF A 2 COME LEV



by Bönz Malone

#### THE GARDEN OF BREEDIN'

I's a boy. Born premature to an immature society of pant-sagging, incuckle-draggin' rithrecks. The game-light, hoode-wear'n father figure steps outta the Big Black Screen onto the corner of Bedford and Nostrand (Brocklyn). Do you see him? The dominant male sex? The one holdin the ouart. makin pee-cee?

That's him—20 years from now. The foretold story of the fatherless boy, Right now, he's sleeping (the if it cumbsnatcher), but before long, he'll aweak with a high-pichted or yor people and security. Here in N.Y.'s own inner-city housing system—also known as the Home of the Brave or "The Garden of Breedin"—rug rats are a lot like roaches. Neither one you wanted, but both you've outs like with.

It's a tale of woe, growing up in a single-parent setting. Momma held down two jobs plus sold Armway Pf. 5till couldn't get off the ground floor of the gette. Everyone knew us though—as the poor folks from the fifth floor. Despite many hardships we always got by with little or no money down. And Moms was always there for me. Always!

Just like I'm gonna be there for you. Am I your Daddy? Hell no but you see that girl with the big littles? That's Kizzy, she'll provide you with all the biological history. I don't wanna have to lell you something like Mommy and Daddy ain't together no more 'cause Daddy couldn't keep Inimed in a job, his "Bell" in his pants, or his hands to himself. Hey, don't cn—it's not your fault. It wasn't anything you said or did that made him go away. He was permature too.

You have no idea now, but you will. In the meantime, I'll keep running to the store and buying milk and changing your Pampers and playing "The Crying Game," icause a young Black male needs a father figure. Here in the urban garden, the "Gangsta Bitch" has been dominated



Entitled by desire, they five for cheap sex up against the opposite side of our living-room wall. I know what's happenin', he saws thing i'm watchin' on Richard Bey, Meanwhile, the baby's cyring upstairs or because Mrs. Johnson's alcoholic husband beats her in front of the occlusion. Every right it's the same situation, with the same outcome. The neighbors of into the staircase and nump against the wall until the pictures fall, and then Harvey slams his wife on the ceiling. Now it's gome take forever to stifle thisk it.

With each passing day my love for this boy grows, while my pallence owportates. Kids always want to play and they never shir fulf They're always hungry and stinking up the place. Food allower the damn care. Per Pampers saggin? Bably throwin'r Jun and stuth. By their their takes to get a warm washcloth, the little boy's surrounded by crumb-sactiches. Sometime I can't deall it is lie by been sentenced to life in 1464. When the kird sile states, yours ends. I'm led up with the screaming and all the but languaged I think about using. The overwhalming and all the but languaged I think about using. The overwhalming responsibility of becoming responsible scares ms. I want to help, but the scream of the scare of the sc

Franky, I don't want my nephew growing up in this kinda environment. Living in these last days, the Black American family needs a strong malerole model. If not, then ladies, do fa self—Roseanne gotta blow up without Dealf I Ask yourself, how did Mom old 7And why? All the insignificant jobs she'd take to make a way out? Where did have got the strength to come home at high? Maybe he loved us. Enough to stick around even after her knight in shining armor split. Deadly lawse want Mommy out to court home a

Yeah. That's that upforwn Real Love, the kind that don't come in a cn. Right now, he's sleeping and I'm writing my story. Remembering the time they threw my old sneakers on the phone line. The smell of pizza. My first Big Wheel. Mister Softee playing his jam. Plus the great-set lesson of my life. that everybody was equal in the projects. There wan't the Black kid, the White kid, and the Spic...twas jam's us against he roaches! Those were the days. All whe had to do was turn on the lights, and they'd run. Now they re in the fridge! When I'm leaving, I be light, yo—lock he doo'l They were also my messages!

But roaches are still easier to deal with than babies. They don't wake up every three hours to make your life miserable. They don't need cans of Similac or an expensive stroller. You wouldn't know they're around, they're so quiet. Plus they never ask me, "Yo, B, what's up?" That question is just to sensitive to answer.

Not so long ago, the only thing of serious concern was the disco sosene. I was prout to be called "Staturan Malone—The Late-Night The Swinger." Now, I'm Mr. Namry, the sucker. Not by choice. Lby situation. No smokin "and not much chinkin" for me, there are nights when not spend my last dollar on a loaf of bread or a can of milk. My sleepless nights are now accessed by teething and ear infections. Being a perient in the "9bs is a painstaking job, especially in the gheto. The frustration bubblis up to a point that you got party for self—control or else. Sometimes Iffen myself-yelling back: "Shuft up Right now!" mnot the one late the public with a point which will be provided the provided by the property of the provided the provided with the provided provided the provided with the provided provided the provided with the provided provided provided the provided provided

He's my nephew and I just hope his mother comes back from welfare before he wakes up. I've missed four months of partying, not by situation... By choice! Just like my Mom made a loving choice with that self-sacrificing spirit of hers.



# the first



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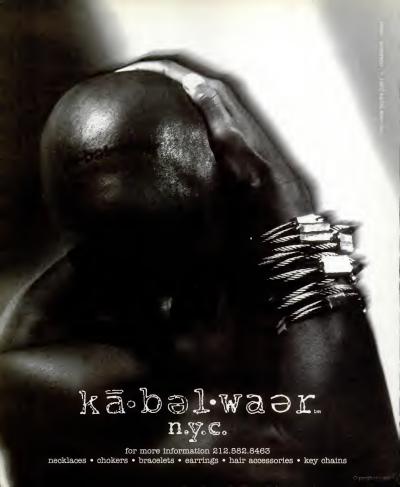
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## A Kwanzaa Carol







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MORALES &



THREE HOURS LATER, ROSENSAUN, A 29-







AND IT MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN.





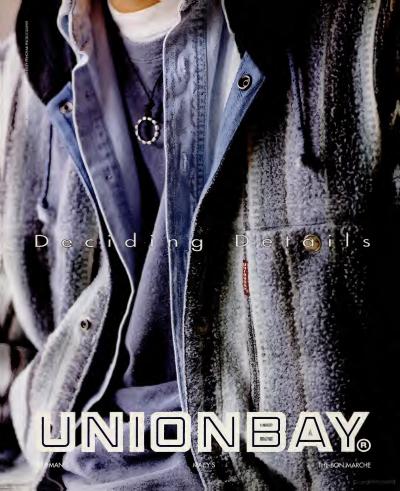














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ACTOR

TALK ABOUT A "BIG BROTHERIS WATCHING you" experience in full effect. A year ago, actor Michael Wright, who had just signed to stair in Sugar Hill, was at the Manhattan hot spot Coffee Shop (best known for serving trendiness) with the film's scriptmeister Barry Michael Cooper and producer Rudv Lanolise.

While chatting about candidates for the pivotal costarring role in Sugar Hill—a modern-day tale of criminally enterprising brothers in the Tood—n walks the most betterprising man on the planet. Namely, actor Wesley Snipes. Making a beeline to his reserved table, he sported Wright and Cooper and stopped for a nanosecond. "What's up?" lead on "Oh, melly?" and all of a sudden Wright had himself a costar with box-office bang.

Business aside, Wright prefers holding court with his cronies at Jezebel, but maybe that's because his mom, Alberta, owns the antebellum-style Manhattan eatery. "Let's just say the price is right," Wright says laughing.

He doesn't laugh, however, at any comparison of Sugar Hill to the previous Cooper-penned film New Jack City. "This is definitely not New Jack City II." Wright says." Although it has the criminal element, it's really about the death of the black American family."

A committed actor of 14 years file stitute of a time at the Lee Strasbery Theater Instalted for all most fively. Wright refinits from pondering whether or not Sugar Hill may be his vehicle to stardom. Actually he went through that high drama a few years ago when his rivetling role as the drugged-out led sidney of the Hotom-type male quintet didn't stop Time Five Heartbeats from bombling at the box office. Heartbeats' schoming with the star of the Strasberg of t

Making Michael Wright a star

powarful parformanca wasn't easily shaken from the minds of those few who did see it: Cooper, for instance, wrote Sugar Hill with Wright in mind.

Wright feels his "dual upbringing" on Manhattan's Upper Wast Side spared him from the no-way-out anguish his Sugar Hill charactar endures. "My mom sant me to quasi-prograssive prep schools," he says, "I got to mingle with the rich white folks and I had my homies from around-the-way. So I can speak tha languaga from both sides."

Being packed off to Paris at 18 (to see tha world) helped Wright acquira yet another language, French, which comes in handy now that ha's a certified globetrotter. Back in 1984, he made the HBO film The Laundromat with Amy Madigan and Carol Burnett in Paris, After that, he lived in Tokyo and filmed Bedtima Eyes starring as an AWOL black American sailor involved in an obsessive affair with a Japanese woman. He's also had smaller roles on these shores in The Wandarers and The Principal and the short-lived sci-fi television series V.

Racently back from a two-month stint in Fili. Wright admits he'll stay just about anywhara to indulga in daap-saa scuba diving. Anywhere but the West Coast, that is, "Haven't you noticed some stranga otherness happens to people who stay in LA too long?" he asks. "I definitely don't want to become an L.A. pod person." Deborah Gregory





into a record deal. She did it, industry execs know it-some even have the

deed on tane. No backsaat floozy, Huntar is following in the footsteps of Andrea True ("More, More, More") as the latest porn actor turned recording artist. The

star of such cinematic gems as Black Bitchas in Haat, Huntar has raleased her first singla, "I Want It All Night Long"-an affabla dance/house cutand is preparing to ralease a complata album in 1994.

As charming as she is petite, the 5'3" cappuccino-skinned Hunter is thoroughly nonplussed about her yaars in porn. She did it for tha monay ("and becausa I enjoyed it") and saas nothing wrong with that, "I've done things a lot of people do all the time and some things they wish they could do."

Though no longar making adult films, the Brooklyn-born Hunter continues to perform her strip show at New York-area nightclubs and has Incorporated singing into her act. "I used to strip and than sing, but people would laava after I took my clothas off," she says. "Now, I sing while I strip."

Tha daughtar of a funaraal salasman, Hunter laft home at 16 and supported herself by working as a clerk at the Latin Quartar-one of the first downtown (actually midtown) clubs to play rap. There sha mada friands with most of hip hop's old guard: Big Daddy Kana (whosa videos sha's appaared

HEATHER HUNTER SLEPT HER WAY in), Mella Mel, and Cool DJ Red Alert, to name a few

> At 18, she answered an ad in The Village Voica for strip-taase artists. A pictorial in Players followed ("I'd always wanted to do magazine layouts"), and than cama the offars for porno films. She was off to Hollywood where she made 17 films in two years and took her burlasqua show on national tours. A brief stint on Soul Train ended when tha producers discovared tha natura of her thespian tandancies.

> Huntar's first stab at vocal performance came through her portrayal of an aspiring singer in Torch, one of the faw porn movias to includa intalligibla dialogua. On tha sida, sha wrota, produced, and printed her own single. Back in New York she became a reqular at Show World, an almost full-service adult-entertainment enterprise in Times Squara, where an A&R rep from Island Records caught one of her presentations. Hunter gave him her 12-inch and was signed to the label in 1991 (she was later dropped, but re-signed to its subsidiary Graat Jones last year).

Though sha's vat to procure a \$60 million megadaal, Huntar shares some other qualities with Madonna: They're both short, their music is, by and larga, generic, and they're savvy about using sex to further their careers. But Hunter. who was a graffiti artist during har hip hop days, is also shopping a comic book-The Adventures of Superpussy. It's fiction. Max Ernst

FATALE





#### Maxwell sings like the son of soul

HE WRITES ON THE PIANO AND SINGS like a soudiful sire. He never leaves home without a microcassette recorder—ever ready to "catch his partial" of the sound of th

His name is Maxwell, and, like Prince, he's funky. Although this young soul man is still one of New York's best-kept musical secrets, labels keep calling, calling, calling to place a bid on the soft-spoken 20-year-old who's poised for superstardom.

As a teenager growing up in Cypress Hills, Queens, he became obsessed with such '70s icone as Siy Stone, Bootsy Collins, Marvin Gaye, Chaka Khan, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, and Aretha Franklin. At 18, he moved to Manhattan and got serious about his music career; by 19, he had already written some 300 songs. Maxwell says earnestly: "I really wanted to pursue writing and producing at first, but people kept telling me that I had a certain quality."

Could that be star quality? In his head, he says, "I'm already signed. Maybe I'm psychic but I know how many records I've sold already."

Don't get the soul brother wrong, though. That's not just arrognost not just arrognost not just arrognost not have the soul properties of the desert of the making furms to the Ceator for interprising simple distess about his "honey," singing perior social beautiful properties of the desert of vocative ballade about Armagedon't "I'm not trying to be a messian or anything, he says, "but the work is used fering and I hope that my music can help people."

First Prince's sudden singing retirement, and now the second coming. Have mercy. Gordon Chambers

SINGER

## **NEXT**

#### Supernatural's rhymes are out of this world

"IT WAS THE CLOSEST THING TO A LYRICAL BEATDOWN I EVER SAW," says Public Enemy's Chuck D.

From the second Supernatural stepped creatings at the New Matter Seminar's Mod Battle sid. Ally you know he was no smore other when the seminar's Mod Battle sid. Ally you know he was no smore other the was arrest with crystals, dreads, and goggless covering his eyes. And when he turned not no "arrephiblian" and made his voice sound like in was underwaler, he got the crowd all open. After that, people were rappring on Supernatural severy word. In spid executed sport transcustural properties of the seminatural severy word. In spid executed sport transcustered to the seminatural severy word. In spid executed sport transcustered to the seminatural severy word. In spid executed sport transcustered to the seminatural severy word. The spid executed sport transcustered to the seminatural series which is spid executed to the seminatural series of the seminatural seminatural seminatural series of the seminatural semi

This B-boy prodigy's skills are literally out of this world. As Supernatural explains it, he is originally from Neutralia ("the planet of freestyle") and his spaceship dropped him of fin Marion, Indiana. His fellow aliens, the Aboriginals ("abstract" and "original"), chose his mother, who acreed to birth him in human form.

"I'm a vessel," he says. "My body is a shell and a lot of the different styles inside me are from deed poets or dead rappers that nevermade it. "Do rove that his words are furly sontaneous, Supernatural will ask his audience for topics (everything from animals, cookies, crayons, ever shoelaces), then turn them into a rhyme, stay on beat, be grammatically correct, and have it all make sense.

"Rhyming is a form of preaching," he says, "a form of teaching my people, but not only my people, but not only my people—all races." He's even freestyled for a room full of nuns and Catholic school girls. The topic? Self-esteem. "I wanna keep my music non-offensive to everybody. I want to be healing. Rhyming is like charting almost you can call spirits

by rhyming," he says.

Although Supernatural has lived in NYC for over four years, it wasn't until recently that he decided to pursue a record contract. ("My record deal is for my two-year-old son, Hadjie," he says, "to let him know that his daddy is somebody and to provide for him.") A week before the Seminar, a friend led Supernatural to several record companies, where he freestyled for ASR heads. Everyone offered him demo deals, but only EastWest Records was smart enough to offer a record deal on the spot. When he was brought to the office of label CEO Sylvia Rhone, he rhymed about the images on her television screen

while she flipped channels with her remote control. When he finished, Rhone's words were, "Baby, there's nothing more to say."

Supernatural certainly has more to say. He hopes his upcoming all-freestyle debut album will take hip hop on this planet to a whole now level. How does he keep those rhymes straight in his head? "I think the thought before the last thought was thought of." Mimi Valdés



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### NEXT

DIRECTOR



THE COOL THING ABOUT BRETT RATNER IS THIS: HES white guy in hij hop who knows he's a white guy, He's Jewish and, he says laughing, blacks and Jews have a very common culture. "Like our methers," he says was a very common culture. "Like our methers," he says with a grin. "They call us all the time." Perhaps this is why one of the most sought-after hip hop video directors has such deep and trusting relationships with some of black music's biggest armse.

Nile Rodgers, of Chic fame (and a close family friend), nursed Ratner back to health as a child when a dog attack left him with 150 stitches. And efter giving him his first guitar (which Ratner never learned to play), Rodgers gave him his first camera.

Russell Simmons became "e mentor, e fether elmost," to Rather when they started hanging out while Ratiner studied film at New York University. Simmons introduced him to Public Enemy, and Chuck D asked him to do PSAs for Columbie Records, then proffered an invitation for Ratner

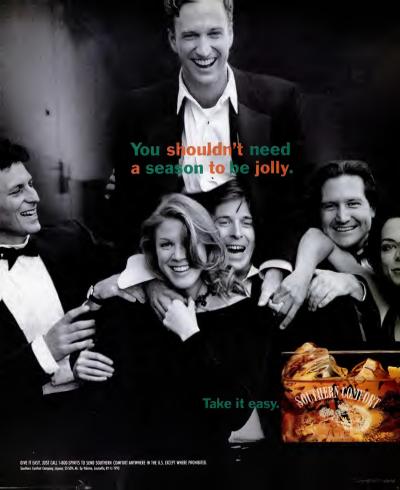
to tour with the group. Ratner's work draws from the rough edges of hip hop, thriving in the natural-light world of ghetto exteriors and brotherly camaraderie. Ratner has been partly responsible for the identity of the post-EPMD Erick Sermon, shooting him singing in the shower and chilling in the studio with Shādz of Lingo. And Ratner's classy, sassy video for Terri & Monice's "Uh Huh" could set a new trend in funky divadom. Ratner believes his success in hip hop comes from a passion lacking in other directors. "I'm a white boy. but I love the music so much. I can feel it. Some great directors come in with huge budgets and lots of time, but they don't understand where, say, Redman is coming from. So the videos come out bad. I understand every little innuendo, every verse of his songs, 'Cause I live it, And I hang out with Russell, so I also know from the beginning about the image, the marketing."

Rather is typically sanguine about his hip hop success, despite his white-guy status. He's heard of the telk, perlicularly about Simmons, who gets criticized for himing white people to do hip hop logs. As the saying goes, the surest way to cross over is through a white guy's eyes. "I don't think Russell thinks that hard into it," Pather says. "I'm just his new Rick Rhubi, you know, the new white Jewish kid."

Laughing, he continues: "Andre Harrell is just the opposite of that. He wants to hire black people: I think Russell" is ill tills smarter than that. He knows you have to have the smartest people around you—not that white people are smarter than black people. It "is just the it"s not about bleck or white, but about who's smartest, who's most passionate about the work."

Pession has led Ratner in a multitude of multimedia directions. Rel Redords also but or Research is refur to confer's propering to shoot his first motion picture, a portreit of Milami-based serial rapist, to be produced by Simmons. But if and half promove. "Russell loves gangster films, that's the kind of staff he warist to do." Ratner says. "I want to make though;" proviously films, and flussell's giving me the opportunity to do that, to direct my labor of love, "cause that's what makes a great film." Sort Poulson-Pypour.

Brett Ratner's videos: where technicolor meets black and white



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# EXTRATERRESTRIALS...





#### I, LATINA

When Rosie Perez hit the screen as the wacky loudmouth girlfriend in

Do the Right Thing, who knew she'd become a Hollywood darling? Mim Udovitch catches up
with the original fly girl, fresh from her first starring role in Featless.

#### Photographs by Cleo Sullivan

osie Perez is a very ferching combination of the involved production of the combination of the try (waist, hands, feet, ears, nose) and the agenher" pletro hoosy? Jis it watering a black lace offthe-shoulder blouse, beaded and layered over posiongener gauze, a poison-green wood ministir bordered in more lace and sequins, black DKNY hone; a boatffart, curly wig of the perp ourse dut soes advertised in the back of comic books, right after the X-ray Spex, and right before the Amazing Sex-Monkeys; inchlong fake rails in a tasteful design of poison-green, where, and damonds, and pith ktazey plottom slipwite, and damonds, and pith ktazey plottom slipwite, and damonds, and pith ktazey plottom slipmashed down to make them into mules. "If's the Puerto Ricain in me, "she says of the footwar.

She looks sexy and funny, and she's supposed to, since she's dressed for her role in Cop Griev Waitress \$2 Million Tip, in which she plays Nicolas Cage's wife, "a kind of low-rent Alexis Carrington." In addition to looking as sexy and funny as she is supposed to, she's telling me a sexy, funny story:

"Until I went to school in L.A. when I was 18, I never had a roommate besides my sisters, right? And with my sisters, you could walk without a bra on, you could walk butt-naked. So I'm in my room, and I want to masturbate, right? And I hear my roommate go into her room. So I settle in my bed, get in my mindframe, start my hands going down the covers, and all of a sudden: knock, knock, knock. And I go: 'WHAT? And she goes: 'Um, do you want any chocolate cake?' And I said: 'NO, I don't want chocolate cake, Can you close the door?' And she goes away, so I settle back in, take a deep breath, start up again, and: knock, knock, knock. And I'm like, 'Argh!' because I'm right to the point where I was about to come and I'm like: WHAT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?' And she said: 'Oh, I just wanted to tell you this guy's on Arsenio.' And she leaves. So I go back to bed and I have one foot off the floor, other foot still on the ground and: knock, knock, knock. And I go: 'LOOK. I MASTURBATE. I MASTURBATE ON A REGULAR BASIS. I DON'T HAVE A MAN IN MY LIFE RIGHT NOW, SO DON'T

FUCKIN' COME IN MY ROOM WHEN THE DOOR IS CLOSED! And I slammed the door and I fell out laughing. When I opened the door again she was still there, gasping. She was like... You mastarbate? After that she would tiptoe up and ask: Is it that time?... Okay. And tiptoe away."

It is true that Rosie Prevz is, as The New Yesh Time put it with a typical disregard for enthic cliches, "a fitterencker," which is to say, she is Puerro Rican and has an extraordiardily lively presence. It is true that in person, as on the screen, she has major-league dimples, the face of ademonic infaint, the body of a pettie but nonetheless solidly built brick house, and a vocal range that starrs at Berty Boop and ends somewhere around car alarm. And it is true that all of these things like it is a start of the start

#### I'M UNDER-25 AND I WILL NEVER SWITCH TO BEING UNDER-30. I'M GOING TO BE THIS AGE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

fire besides her dancing and acting work. Among them are a managing gig for a girl R&B group called 5 A.M.; a nascent video-directing career; and a recent stint as executive producer of the short-lived HBO hip hop variety show Rais Perca Presents Society's Ride.)

And it's not that the B-pirl persona is an act. Rosie comes from the phetro hear of Bushwick, Brooklyn, she is demonstrably tough, and incredibly determined in a way that long perdates her success as an entertainer. Your growing up the way I grew up, 5 she says, "I was scared to run to because it was tilken by helly would swell up and all these licid would just drop our of me. So I was like: See? Jossop. because they're gonna fuck up would be supported by the says, and the support of the sound put of the support of the suppor

But while her he jelf image is not artificial in the sense that, say, Fince portege file Kevikij or Apollonia have artificial images, it is a side of her person ality that her tends to emplasaise her her media appearances, her business dealings, and, in a nutshell, her concunters with authority figures of the majority culture. When Rosie imagines meeting with the president, for example the was invived to the White House, but didn't go), the pictures herself saying: "Whattay oug omno about the canchedosd on my able combination. And not without historical precedent: "In some ways, she's like a latin Monroe," says Andrew Bergman, who's directing her in Cop Gives Waitress Et Cetera and So Forth. "I think her potential is limitless."

the masturbation story, aside from its inherent entertainment value, serves as useful illustration of several of Rosie Peres's most basic characteristics: a Blitche outspokenness, a sense of humor, a commitment to enjoyment, and a certain tendency to come out of left field at about 150 miles per hour, in a way that is the personal-charisma equivalent of wearing keopard-print; vouc out 164 kev outversey fift.

Due in part to this personal-charisma thing, in part to an equally extensedinary work eith, she's had a lot of success in a number of supporting parts in the comit to sericonic range. Although had did not set out to be an accor. She set out to be a very large marine biologics; like Mr. Jacquezi Cousteau. With this goal in mind, she moved from her native Brocklyn to Los Angeles to acter of Oolege. While damning in a club Angeles to acter of Oolege. While damning in a club and became a Sauf Trair a dancer. This led to some formation of the contraction of the contraction of the contraction of the damning of the contraction of the contraction of the contraction of the damning of the contraction of the contraction of the contraction of the damning of the contraction of the contraction of the contraction of the damning of the contraction of the contraction of the contraction of the damning of the contraction of the co

While they were at it, they also charged that she had lied about various derails of her life story. These included the initial semiscurrilous tabloid report concerning her stay in a group home at the age of 12 for having stabbed someone, which Rosie mentioned, unaware that media were present, while addressing a youth group after a screening of Forest Whitaker's Strapped, a grim movie about the nature of hope and hopelessness in the ghetto. They also charged that she lied about her age, which is pretty funny, considering bour she lies about her age: "I'm under-25 and I will never switch to being under-30," she says, "I'm going to be this age for the rest of my life. I think it will be funny when I'm 50 and I'm still saving I'm under-25. My mom is like that-that's where I get it. To this day, I don't know how old she is, she lies so much about her age. I'm like, 'Mommy, didn't you say that three years ago?"

To say that these tabloid stories are subjects on which Rosic doesn't care to dwell would be pattring it mildly. She bursts into tears at even the most tactful mention of them. From the standpoint of humanity, one can sympathize with her, although from the standpoint of information-gathering it makes things a little murky. They are made murkier still by the

#### ROSIE DIDN'T SET OUT TO BE AN ACTOR. SHE SET OUT TO BE A

street? And the welfare system is a fuckin' scam. What's goin' on here, Bill' Wake, up. Wake the fuck up." She is like this, she says, "because there was so much truth in my life all along. When you see your friends and family struggle every day, sometimes they don't sugarcoat the way they talk royou, because they re just too stressed out, so you don't have not-colored glasses on. It's like the sun is hitting you right smack dead in the face, you know.

However, Begirl is nor the only language Rosis speaks. In from of her father, the say, she doesn't curse at all. And when, just lounging around in her trailer on the set of Gey Gew Wilmar S. Millmar Tip, she talks with fewer curse words and more ob-my-goodnesses about less-freighted ropic like costar Cage't chest hair and the dolphins she saw leaping goodnesses about less-freighted ropic like costar Cage's chest hair and the dolphins she saw leaping orthose to make the first Coast Highway one day last year. She talks about driving to the Brooklyn Bridge was the saw of the company of the saw leaping of the saw leaping to the decody in Bridge dream, and I just sit there, Secause it's so beautiful. There's a loot forwer three I loos it one ever changes."

Like most toughness, her toughness is not simple. Like most toughness, it's predicated on a sensitivity without which there wouldn't be any reason for toughness in the first place. "Ever since Rosie was altitel girl, she was special," says the sister Carmen. "She had that little star you're born with, and other people can see it. So whatever you do, talk highly about my sister, because remember, she will be winning an Ouza' in the future."

If Rosie does win an Oscat in the futute, it will be because of the way the sensitivity gives the tesilience depth. Combined with tits, it's an unbeatHeavy D, and eventually In Living Colar's Fly Girls. The chereography and dancing led to being out in a nightclub where she met Spike Lee, who eventually cast her as Tina in Do the Right Thing. Her tendition of this magic moment includes a not-bad imitation of Mr. Lee's half-lidded, monotonal delivery. "He was hitting on me," she says. "Although he denies it to this dav."

This led to roles in Night on Larth, White Mes Can's, Junp, and Ultraumd Harrs. She was delightful in all of these, and it takes nothing away from these parts to say that they were all variations on the same toughculting, worky Latina theme. But it does explain why here performance in Ferre Wer's Farnels, in which the costars with Jeff Bridges, in nor only delightful but also ausprise in the role of a young, erligious mother, simultaneously grieving and blaming hereal for the death of the rous, he is both powerful and deliference that those she can not only perform, the can also act.

As if to prove that she is a bons fide star and to hash-in-the-pan, and formicurilous tablod stories about Rosie have recently appeared, suggesting that she is a front-aritis and on angel; one had her martying a model from Madonna's Sac book in a hush-shush eremony in a Banhartan church, attended by "director Spike Lee and entertainer Rublus". This was horseshir. Unfortuatedy, it had the effect of prompting her mother, Lydu, and stater Magda. The starting of the starting of the starting of from whom the is extranged, and who were milified at to go to a competing tabloid and claim that Rosie rose to competing tabloid and claim that Rosie reselected them out of shame of their recovery. fact that her publicist's worst fear appears to be that his story will end upmerting the subued." ROSIE PEREZ COMES FROM FUCKED-UP FAMILY AND SIXTHINGANTS On one oir setally surrounding these store that the information-gathering surrounding these store protons. However, the beate facts are these. She was born very poor in Budwick, Brookly, to Lydia Pere, who was not married to Rose is father, Instant Serman, a merchant marine who lived primarly in Paerro Rico. She has the Orthodor and sisters, owned full, some half. She grow up party in a convent home called as. She has the Orthodor and sisters, owned full, some half. She grow up party in a convent home called as. The convent home called as the second of th

These are the bare facts, but not, to Rosic, the relevant ones. She is very close to be Aunt Anna, he father, her sixer Carmen, her brother Cookie, and various other shilling and cousins. She freely admit that her family wason welfar. She does not deny the group-home story but does not wish to discuss it." had a very difficult childhood, but I don't want to goo be a boasting thing, "the says," I don't want to goo (grad. Fifty million people went through what I went through and there just goine about their lives."

She is also reluctant to leave the impression that her early life was one of unrelieved horror. Of her childhood with her Aunt Anna, she says: "On the block where I grew up, everybody was in everybody's business. You know, you'll see somebody making love with the shades half down and the hot sun. Or you'd

I WAS SCARED TO TURN 16

be looking out the window and seeing your neighbor with her breasts surgically attached to the windowsill. You had no money so you couldn't go anywhere, and all your friends were there, so you just hung out. It was kind of cool because no one could act like they were better than anybody else, and if they tried you could say: 'Ai, please, your mother's on welfare too-I saw her standing on the line. It's so funny how you don't think those days were the greatest, but they were, like running in front of the johnny pump, trying to act like you don't wanna get in the water. but you're just waiting for the curest guy to out you in, so your T-shirt could get all wet and you'd try to act shy, while your titries are, like, bouncing around, Just things like that. That's why when I have my kids they'te growing up in the city, in a really cool neighborhood in Brooklyn."

I we, in light of the masturbation story (if we could just maken but or ione more rime) you could just maken but or ione more rime) you will prhap not believe that Rosie is a young woman of old-stainoed and modest values. But more returned to the returned that with Rosie, nothing is simple, and day in midrown, on location for Gip Gip and \$50 n. and will not an indicate, which will not be a made of the returned to the returned

many brothers and sisters and they were all so cod and so collected, Just fed out of place, like I was gonna say something stupid, and everyone was gonna by something stupid, and everyone was gonna up to talk tome, I would be like, thi, and, then the put talk tome, I would be like, thi, and, and then the put talk tome, I would be like, thi, and, and then the limit of the limit of

This aura of the shy little girl is today just a barely perceptible suggestion that this woman is also, as Truman Capote said of Monroe, a beautiful child. But modesty is as modesty does, and Rosie's modesry is not about to get in the way of her having fun.

"Let's have fun," she says. "Il Itelly ou the rappers I think are out, okay? Ohm yap, they're goingt on think I'm ameia, that's Spanishi for like a slut, or more like adiriy girl. Let's see. Special Bel. He's cure. He's very cure. He's very, very cure. Almost the whole crew of Onys, Sickly Fingaz, with his lips and his ball shing head? Odbibb. And Suavé with his beautiful soft chocolate skin? His skin is so pretry and smooth and he has the cutest cheekbones. He just looks so rough that it's cure. Um, He'rs see, who else is cure? Sadar X of Brand Nubian is really, really cure. Snoop Deggy Doggs i cure. Treath is swo, he's nor cure, but the mouth. He has the most piercing blue eyes. He had a pothelly, though. But I could get over that. No, he's a married man. ... Hinkil Just ink men. "The sold exception I observed to this undoubtedly true statement was Wesley Snipes. Wesley Snipes is just not Rosic's type. And I only feel it's okay to mention this because he has already heard her say so, and todl her, "That's alright, baby. You'don't old io' for me, either."

Bester in not wild about the city of Lea Angeles. The majoring of Hippanici in L. and Mosciona. Charles and Mosciona think Puerto Ricans are different, the says by up of explanation. Cabana took down on everybody, then there's Mexicans and they then Puerto Ricans. Bezallass are solve Mexicans, and Dominicans are with Puerto Ricans, and Nicanaguans would be almost with Bezallass. And they do not have a quick wit in LA. and it's very irrinating, And they drive store, no. No lous owshall always ger in LA. 2 'Why are you so modif' until I'm like, I'M NOT FUCKING MAD, OKAY'.

Rosie is also not in love with the island of Mantann. She is a Brooklyn girl, and she loves the beautiful borough of her birth to this day. One afternoon in August, she and I and KT, whose single "Come Baby Come" is currently enlivening life on The Box, go for a drive around the Fort Greene area. K\* got good manners, is a good driver, and sings "Love to love you,

#### 'VERY LARGE MARINE BIOLOGIST, LIKE MS. JACQUES COUSTEAU.'

from every conceivable angle while doing it. Or anyway, Rosie has that expectation. I'm just doing nothing. We are Jving on the ewin beds in Rosie's trailer, which, with their floral synthetic chirac bedspreads with matching curtains and valances, add to an overall decor that could best be summarized as Barbie's Dream Camper Made Life-Size.

"I would die if kick of mine char age were having esse," she rella me. What you pur teurund on the ratiier after a chance encounter and gossip session with christ and the risk fix fix fors, during which it wann't totally clear to me which one's the Daddy and which it wann't totally clear to me which one's the Daddy and which me with the Dady show one's the Mack. Chist and Christ were unding their siden, sullen, anchexypally 13-yau-odd way home from the Taday show on the same stretch of 18 at Serset on one which the case and crew of Cop Giru Blade Blade Blade and the case and crew of Cop Giru Blade Blade and sels if the can keep her T-shirt on, and cut the lights of "R Rosie saws."

She was, according to those who knew her when, a shy child, and, incredible as it might now seem, perhaps a little on the prissy side. She was always kind of brainy, and we used to make fun of her because she was always into her books," says Carmen. "She was very much a church girt, and she would get on our nerves, always telling us god this, god that. And we would be like." We don't wanna hear it: "

Except for the god part, this is also how Rosie remembers it: "I was shy. If there was music I would dance, but if there wasn't music, you just saw me holding up the wall. You know what it is? I had so he's got great ries. And Tupue in really, really cure!

I would be fair to say that Rois is not not mode

est to know what she likes, right down to the details.

He's gotto besery. The excitest thing ongust think

are their nostrils and their undertarms—you know

out if goes deep in if he has a nice mustle on his

chest? And he can have askinny nose, a straight nose,

a wale nose, but when a man loods at you with pas
and he can be when a man loods at you with pas
just flare a little bit. And I like a man with nice feet,

seey feet. And like mush hands.

And Puerco Rican men are the most beautiful men in the world. The way Puerto Rican men make love, Oh My, God. It sjast like, they got the rhythm, buy bey, oft my goodness, and the passion and the first intensity states a state of the state surpasses, nerposses, Gery outself a Puerco Rican, but would be found that surpasses, nerposses, Gery outself a flower Die Rosen, my god, helf like pery out thinkin! It is so Because, I always said! wouldn't marry a Puerco Rican, I'll probably end up marrying a balek man, because I think black men nare nows.) Black men make the proposition of the state of the s

You may be worried that Rosie is unfairly limiting heeself to ballchaeder, cough-handed black men with flaring nostrils, nice feet, and a Puetro Rican heritage. Not to worry. If you should introduce in Rosie's presence, for example, the notion that Alee Baldwin is not, in your view, bad-looking, she will reply: 'Oh, my goodness, no HES NOT. He's gorgoon.' I saw him at a restaurant and I was like salivatine at Rosie\* along with the radio. Although they have only been daring a month, he has had a ctuon Rosie for a long, long time, and used to tage her appearance. To solve the recommendation of the solve the recommendation of th

Brooklyn is looking its end-of-summer best, and Rosie keeps up a kind of running walentine on its local points of interest and scenic views. "This is Fort Greene Park, it's beautiful and ligo here every morning, and George the bum on the corner always says good morning. And that's the boy whose hair havit been combed since birth. This is the block I want to live on some day."

Since Brooklyn and Rosie go way back, you can lead all allors of things by being there with her. You can be innocently sitting in her sister Carmen's kitchen, with its reproduction of Da Vinci's The Last Supper, its past seem, its air of happy homines, Supper, its past seem, its air of happy homines, drinking fruit punch and minding your own business, when you will suddenly learn that Rosie used to weigh 180 pounds. You will learn it in following manner: Her sister Carmen will saw. "I'm yer?"

nervos. I've never talked to the press. Did you know Rosie used to veigh 180 pounds. "When someone Rosie used to veigh 180 pounds." When someone Rosie used to veigh 180 pounds." When someone to si living large like Rosie, you don't thint to sak is, it when someone work of the result of the rose are reading. (In case you're interested, bit work women's size in the rose when she want for each rose when she want beach to Brooklyn the same moved to LA; when she came back to Brooklyn the same moved to LA; when she came back to Brooklyn the Right Thing, a summer of 1988 is we was cast in Duk Right Thing, a morber man. Sin't Alamin, you're never goning extend and the range of the same proper proper proper greater and the same proper greater and the same proper greater. This same greater also did be happy to great on the blackmail pictures," says Rosie. "Usually see gegin where a course as de with the smooth show that the same show them out every opportunity." I want to be seen show the most every opportunity. "I want to be supported to the same show the most seen show them out every opportunity." I want to be smooth show that the smooth show more and every opportunity. "I want to be smooth show that the smooth show more are every opportunity." I want to be smooth show that the smooth show more are every opportunity." I want to be smooth show that the smooth show more are every opportunity. "I want the smooth show the smooth show the same show the same show them out a very opportunity." I want the same show the

Carmen's house, in Ridgewood, is small, immaular, and has from one dominated by a three-piece living-room suite covered in plastic and a chandelier has would ermind you of your grandmother's. This is, according to Rosie, "very Puetro Rican." The list of very Puetro Rican artibutes, according to Rosie, include, but is not limited to: "Being very Joud. And when you come off the plane from Puetro Rico with a leady bug of puetrol we regule in human leaves, that?" a very Puetro Rican sight to see. And slam—this is why I made my company 'Gran in Car Productions and why I made my company 'Gran in Car Productions and used to law yny he lead and loope nobody from school would see me. And saying cerrain things in English when we we would say it in Stanshis, so if wan to ried that ugly man? Julia Roberts. It's insulting, it's kind of like saying, 'Well, she should feel fortunate that we're paying her anything, she doesn't have a lot. I hate being the novelty act. There's times when I go to like an all-white event and they get a kick out of me. I hate that shit. And sometimes, to be quite honest with you, I'll go to an all-black event and they'll get a kick out of me. I hate eths shit too.'

Rosie and I are having lunch at Time Cafe, the downtown media-biz boîte of choice. We are both having a pasta-and-salmon dish, which, while not on the menu, can be obtained by requesting The Russell Simmons. Russell Simmons himself is at Time Cafe today, as he is on pretty much every day I've ever been there, and for all I know he lives there, hanging up his cellular phone by the chimney with care, and sleeping under the bar. That would be very '90s, and we are discussing the very '90s topic of sexual harrassment. "It happens every single day. Every single fucking day," says Rosie, "It gets on my nergy, You know, I dress for me, and it's just so stupid because a man can take off his shirt and walk around like, 'I'm a macho fucking asshole, and women can't even wear tight clothing without being degraded."

Rosie is wearing what she describes as "a tighttitty shirt and pants." It suits her, but there is no question that it's part of what induces buff young men to lean out of car windows making lecherous "Fight the Power" gestures with their clenched fists about it. If the role calls for it, I'll do it. One thing I will never do is use a body double. That's hypocritical. It's like saying, I'm too good to be naked in a movie, but the bitch down the street can do it for me."

osic's bravado aside, her sister's conviction that the will win an Oscar norwithstanding, for-getting, for the moment, her performance in Fearlas, and not even mentioning, Nick Cage's belieff that he is the most professional actor her serve worked with, there is of sourse all his side to Rossic's feelings about her career. Show would hardly be human if something as unexpected as her career in showhiz didn't make her wonder. Why mer? Man, I feel tile othat almost every day," she says. "And it's scary, I keep thinking; it's all gonne end tomorrow os omnething."

She is not so secure, for instance, that she trusts credit, and when she treated herself to a car recently she paid in full lin cash. Very Puerro Rican, "she says." But I don't wanna be nervous about paying for things. I've seen a lot of actresses in follywood think they it real fly and get these fly, big, fat houses and then they fall of I'vo uld not I fucking know if your going to be in the game forever. And I don't need to be large for anybody so I'll just wait, just st and wait."

Rosie says she needs a strong director, but, being Rosie, she also feels the need to fight strength with strength. Of her experience on Fearless, she says, "We'd been through rehearsals, right? And Peter Weir said.

#### ONE THING I WILL NEVER DO IS USE A BODY DOUBLE. IT'S LIKE SAYING, I'M TOO GOOD

say, 'Could you walk me to the store?' the very Puerto Rican way is'—she smacks her lips and whines— "'Can you give me the walk to the store?'"

Rosie and Carmen are sisters and partners in very Puerto Rican-ness, "Me and Carmen went to the premiere of Stric-O-Rama," says Rosie, referring to John Leguizamo's one-man send-up of Latino stereotypes, "and there were all these high-class Spanish people, and we had like the boricua crew. Boricua is like the real, real native Puerto Ricans. So we had a table, and everybody else was like: ha, ha, ha, ha. And we were like: AAAAAAAAAAAAH! screaming out family members' names when he went into different characters, and Daisy Fuentes was looking at us like: 'Oh, please.' And we were like: 'Aw, shut up, honey, you know you got a family just like that.' Afterwards, John Leguizamo's family came over and thanked us. and I thought that was so cool. I thought, yo, they down, they down for theirs."

Of course, being very Puerco Rican is not an unalloyed advantage. "On every movie where I gou pit of a role that is not written for a minority, they always panie. They get nervous and say, 'Oh shit, will this work with a minority? First it was so hard for blacks, and now it s losk yo to be lake first it belloyword's perception of how it's okey to be black. But Hispanies, we're not even in the running. There are no roles. If no stealing the roles with control of the control of the with the control of the con when she walks down the street.

"It's so insulting that you just want to take a bat and hit them all over the head," she says. "I had this one record-company guy actually go, 'We've been doing business for a while, Rosie, when are you gonna give me some pussy?' Straight up, he said that. And I go: 'Maybe when you become a real man in my eyes, or maybe when the world ends, but even then I don't think it's gonna happen, so wake up from your fucking dream, you asshole. Don't ever speak to me like that again, because the next time I'll hit you.' And he was still laughing, he just didn't think that I was serious. It's all about brand-name pussy. That's what these guys are after. They don't see Rosie, they see Rosie Perez, they see a girl with her clothes off on the screen. And I just love blowing their minds when I direct videos and do a good job at it, when I edit my own shit, when I executive produce my own show from my own concept. The same men that once used to try to get me in bed are now asking me for a job, and I love it, I love it."

Rosie was, of course, introduced to the public in a role that included a very lubric ions undex cene, and one the has often said is he was less than thrilled with doing. "In Du ke Right Thim, there was no sensitivity involved in shooting the scene," she says. "I was a young gid, my under-25, for Whin Men, we sat down and chareceptaphed the scene out, and that made me thought the scene, and the standard with the scene of the says. I was a young gid, my under-25, for Whin Men, we sat down and chareceptaphed the scene out, and that made me that the same of the same o

You keep fighting me, 'And I would go: 'I'm not fighting you. Ohh! You're getting on my nerves.' And right before filming, it hit me: 'I ain't gonna pull this shit off. It was too much to handle, too much responsibility to say I can do this by myself. And it took me like six tries of picking up the phone and hanging up, picking up the phone, hanging up, picking up the phone, hanging up, before I finally called Peter, and then I just started crying and I go: 'Man, I'm scared shitless, man, I don't think I can pull it off, man, you gotta call Iodie Foster-because that was their next choice—'cause I'll fuck your shit up.' We both started crying. And he said, 'I'm so glad you called, because I was scared too. Please trust me, I'm not gonna fuck you up. I don't know why you're scared, just trust me.

"After each scene I would be so distraught, I was getting physically sick. Halfway through the shoot, it started getting easier. I did a crying scene, walked away, and started joking with somebody. And Peter goes, 'You're acting, man, congratulations.' I looked at him and I go, 'Oh, shut up.' And he started laughing and he goes, 'Come on, it's all right. You're acting. You're developing your technique.' And I go, 'I don't have a rechnique.' And he goes, 'Yes you do.' And I was like, 'Get the fuck outta here. I'm no Method actor.' So he said, 'No, but you have a technique and it's developing. It's very exciting to see you grow.' And I was like, 'Oh shir. This is some deep shit. I feel funny and embarassed to say it." Rosic pauses and assumes a gleeful expression that's all dimples, eyebrows, and sparkle. "This is deep."



#### THE YEAR IN R&B

## **QUIET STORM**

While no one was looking, a new kind of R&B became the dominant force in pop music. And still it gets no respect. by Frank Owen

hite critics always miss the art that's in the middle of the black community," Andre Harrell said over dinner one Saturday night in late 1990. Harrell's label, Uptown, had already scored its initial success with new jack swing pioneets Guy and R&B rappets Heavy D & the Boyz. However, the arrival of the "hip hop soul" of Mary J. Blige

and Jodeci that would establish Uptown as the reigning powerhouse of

the new R&B was still some months away. Between jokes with friends, the Uptown chair eloquently indicted the media for lionizing extreme and violent forms of black music while at the same time ignoring the more conventional types of black musical expression that atguably speak to the aspirations of as many, if not more, black people than hardcore rap.

Recalling that convetsation today, Harrell still maintains that "if niggas aten't killing each other, white critics don't think it's that interesting. They think

it's boting when black people sing about being in love or paying the rent. They'll put Michael Bolton-a white man singing love songs to a white audience-on the cover of a magazine, but they won't put Babyface on the cover. They don't want to write about a man of color who's leading a normal life "

Notwithstanding the fact that the media nearly always portray subcultures-white or black, punk or B-boy-as more significant than the lives of ordinary young people, Hartell has a point. While gangsta rap's violent imagery continues to attract all the column inches, the biggest story in black music this year has been the return of smoother, more melodic sounds that celebrate the drama of everyday black life.

Even a cursory glance at the pop charts illustrates that this has been an extraordinary year for R&B. Some weeks, as many as eight of the top 10 positions on Billboard's Hot 100 Singles chart were taken by R&B artists of one stripe or another. Reinvigorated by the example of rap, and with the corny buppie accoutrements of the '80s replaced by hip hop beats and trendy street clothes, R&B has been reborn as youth-culture music. In the process, it's attracted a mass audience—utban and suburban, black and white-in the sort of numbers not seen since the Motown era.

"This year, R&B finally caught up with rap," says Andre Harrell. "Rap was the lifestyle music for teenagers. Once R&B married itself to rap, it set the stage for RaB's big comeback as teenage pop music."

The year began with the emergence of a new breed of male vocal harmony groups. Capitalizing on the groundbreaking work done in 1991 by Boyz II Men and Iodeci, three young outfits-Shai, Silk, and Introrose to prominence by combining classic harmonies and up-to-the-minute beats. Though all three groups proved to be adept at uprempo numbers, it was their ballads that got them over with the public.

"It was like somebody turned on a switch and the whole country slipped into a slow-jam mode," says Clinton "Buddy" Wike of Intro. "I'm not





saying it was directly linked to the change of government or anything, but it's like people felt a burden lifted from their shoulders. They wanted to sit back and relax."

Following the male groups, and in the wake of Mary J. Blige's double-platinum debut, What's the 411?, attention shifted to women with the arrival of Jade and SWV. A female trio brought together by their record company, Giant, Jade was an obvious attempt to occupy a middle ground between the upscale image of En Vogue and the tomboy-ish charmoff Tic. Though Jade lacked the grit of Mary J., the trio's combination of sex appeal and street savvy earned them three substantial, if not enormous, hits—"Don't Walk Away, "One Woman," and "I Wanna Love You."

Outstripping Jade's success, SWV ("Sisters With Voices") dominated pop radio in the summer and fall of 1993 with "T ms of Into You,"
"Weak," "Right Here," and "Downtown." Intended as a female answer to Jodeci, complete with an upfront, semi-trough image and gospel-influenced harmonies. SWV sang about cunnilingus, appeared in ads for Cross Colours, and managed to end up with two singles in the pop Top 10 at the same time.

While established producers like L.A. and Babyface, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, and Tedyk Riley continued to prosper, a whole new cast of less-familiar studio mavens began to make waves: Dave Hall, Brian Alexander Morgan, Eddie Ferrell, Jermaine Dupri, and De-Vantee Swing were some of the names that cropped up in the credits to this year's R.8.B hits. "Jam and Lewis, Teddy Riley, and L.A. and Babyface set the tone," as sys-Cassandra Mills, president of the black-music department at Gins Records. "But what happened this year has little to do with them. 1993 was the birth of a new game. There's a whole new musical generation coming of age between the ages of 16 and 24 who are in the process of picking their stars. They're making the Jodecis and Jades happen, and putting money in the pockers of the young producers behind the artists."

Adult black pop, though, also had a strong year. Whitney Houston's soundtrack to The Badyguard continued to sell by the crateload (it's at a million and counting), while two albums of soulful easy listening—the self-citied debut from husky-voiced Toni Braxton and Babyface's Farthe Cool in Yax—enchanted listeners with dreamy returnes and brattataking vocal runs. Familiar but never commonplace, extraordinary pieces of ordinary music, both albums featured some of L.A. and Babyface's best songwriting ever. It may also be their last work together since their partnership, one of the most lucrative in the history of black music, is reportedly on the edge of dissolvine.

Also notable was Oakland trio Tony Toni Toné's third album, Sant of Saul, an eelectic homage to the history of black music that offered nods to Sly & the Family Stone, the Jackson 5, Marvin Gaye, and Isaac Hayes, among others. Neither a harmony group nor a new jack outfit, the Tonyies are musical marvicks who file feorfrestlys from style to style, offering a needed antidote to the often same-sounding harmony groups. And with the recturn release of Jodeci's new album, En Vogue's Ranauwy Lave EP, and Color Me Badd's Time and Chanz, the new Reß movement has come full circle with the return of three trendserting acts that pioneered black pop's more mellifulous soliraction in the last 12 months.

Perhaps it was inevitable that after the heady sonic innovation of the late '80s—when, thanks to the digital sampler, noise became common currency in black pop—there would be a shift back to more soothing, song-oriented music that concentrated on love and relationships rather than social discord. Carl 'Groove' Martin of Shi as 'fully aware of the cul-

turally conservative appeal that the new harmony groups hold for their fans. "It's partially nostalgia;" he contends, noting the trend of new Reb acts covering old ReB tunes (like Jodecis gorgous "unplugged" version of Stevie Wonder's "Lately"). "Harmonious sounds remind people of a time when social relations were supposedly better and things weren' as bad fiscally."

Andre Fischer, senior VP of A&R at MCA, the label that has consistently been on the forefront of the new R&B, puts it this way: "The harmony groups are singing what amount to lullabies. As things get more intense in everyday life, people either want to complain about it, like the hardcore rappers, or they want to be relieved of it."

If the implicit message of hardcore rap—wichet in the hardness of the music as much as in the incendiary concent of the lyrics—is that the world is not what it should be, then the subliminal promise of the vocal groups is that, at the end of the day, everything will be all right. This has led to criticism that the harmony groups are quiescent. How can they sing about love affairs when racism and oppression are everywhere?



Shai's Martin rejects this charge. "Sure, we're angry people," he says. "But we're also very loving people. And the music should be able to reflect all aspects of black life comfortably."

Says Mercury Records president Ed Eckstine, "There is a longer history and a more grand tradition of romance in black musical culture than there is of aggression and political posturing."

everal developments within the music industry have both responded to and enhanced the commercial clour of the new R&B. "Churban" radio stations—a hybrid of whan and pop radio spearheaded by San Francisco's KMEL—feature DJs playing black music for a multiracial audience. Nowadays, churban stations are quicker to play the latest rap and R&B releases than many urban stations. Clearly, the likes of Shai, Silk, and SWV would not have gone double platinum without the exposure among white consumers that these stations provide. The rise to prominence of the churban stations represents a remarkable and far-reaching change in the cultural landscape of American radio, which until recently was governed by a policy of strict musical apartheid.

"The blacker the music, the easier it is to get airplay on churban stations," says Kenny Ortiz, who signed SWV to RCA. "It's not all about

> Jeffrey Osborne and Lionel Richie anymore. You can't purposely make crossover music in order to get on pop radio. These days, you gotta stick to your roots."

Mercury boss Eckstine commends the churban stations for championing new black music, but he also sounds a warning note. "The rise of the churban stations could sound the death knell for traditional black radio," he says. "Black radio has always been the beacon of the black community. What we're seeing now is a form of cultural genecide, as black stations get corporatized in an effort to compere with the white counterpart across the street, which used to be a Top 40 station but now is a black-music station called a Top 40 station."

Another seismic change that has benefited R&B was the introduction of SoundScan, the point-of-sale record tal-

lying system on which the Billhum pop charts are now based. Before 1991, a record's chart position often said more about how much money the record company paid to hype the song than about how many units were sold. SoundScan has changed all that, providing statistical evidence of something many in the R&B world suspected all along: that R&B sells and in huge amounts.

"SoundScan took the decision about what is pop out of the hands of radio and put it into the hands of the consumer," says Cassandra Mills. "1993 is the year that consumers officially declared that R&B is the new pop music."

Adds Ernie Singleton, who heads up MCA's black-music division, "Black music has dominated the charts for years now, and it's becoming



Jade were the middle ground between En Vogue and TLC.

more dominant than ever thanks to SoundScan. SoundScan has taken the color bias out of the charts. The question is no longer 'What color are the people buying the record?' but instead, 'How many people are buying the record?'"

MTV Jams—the daytime R.&B program that has replaced YO: MTV Rapis as the primary showcase for uthan black culture on the music channel—has also helped sustain the music's higher visibility. "MTV Jams has made R&B acceptable to mainstream white America," says host Bill Bellamy, "R&B was kind of Jold in the '80s—kind Of Duppie-ish. Now it's youthful, it's fresh, it's hip, it's fashionable. And MTV Jams has allowed the suburbs no only to place that, but to see it, too."

The phenomenon of white kids seeking out black music is nothing new. What's different this time is that white kids don't have to seek out thenew R&B because it's right there in their living rooms. It is, arguably, their culture too.

the lifestyle depicted in R&B records and videos has become the lifestyle of young, mainsteam America," says Sylvia Rhone, who runs East West Records, home to Progue. Rhone identifies "cross-media marketing"—from CD to radio to video to television to film to soda commercials—as another major factor in bolstering R&B's ubiquitous presence this year.

It's no coincidence that many of the most important Rab albums of recent years have been soundtracks, including New Jurk City, Boomerang, Mo Money, and The Bodyguard. Not only did these records accompany successful films that helped illustrate the contemporary black experience, they were also among the first places that rap and R&B songs were available side by side in a single package.

Cassandra Mills agrees that the new R&B has been particularly adept at exploring the marketing possibilities of the latest multimedia opportunities. "R&B's audience has been greatly expanded thanks to technology," she says. "A lot more people can see it and receive it. The consequence of that is white kids and black kids start to like the same things. It's as easy for a white kid to switch to BET as it is for a black kid."

he look of the new R&B—street but not threatening, stylish but not bourgie—has also contributed to its rebirth among young people. In the '808, R&B dressed up in sills shirts and Versace suits. In the '90s, R&B, like rap, dresses down for success, wearing leather vests and Doc Marrens shoes and sporting labels like Karl Kani, Cross Colours, and Soike's Joint.

"R&B artists are no longer dressing up in costumes," says MCA's Singleton. "They now look as much like their audience as rock stars do. The style is much more colloquial, more in tune with what's happening in the neighborhood or on the college campus."

This is a far cry from the R&B of the previous decode—the era of socalled designer soul, when what was once the sound of jey and sosessing a self-ty, seamless lingle for the good life. Luther Vandross epitomized this trend; his Beverly Hills mansion, his Latique crystal collection, his wardrobe full of expensive Iralians usits for to mention his obsession with his waistline) all suggested the postmodern triumph of style over content that was afflicting R&B at the time. In the '80s, R&B of the presented the establishment and appealed to the adult-music market," comments Andre Harrell.

This started to change in 1988 with the release of two albums—Bobby Brown's Dur's B. Crud and Guy's self-rited debur—that, by combining B-boy urgency and soul-man smoothness, signaled a grittier direction for R.B.B. Though the new jack swing sound that Guy and Brown popularized quickly became formulaie, it he idea of marrying soulful melodies to hip hop bears, of creating R.B.B with a street attitude, persevered into the '90s, setting the stage for the current black-poor penissance.

"People realized that the two cultures—rap and R&B—could exist



under the same roof," says Ed Eckstine. "The R&B world realized that if the music was to grow, then there was a need for a fusion of R&B and hip hop. And the hip hop community realized that the roots of its existence are deeply entrenched in R&B.

R&B's debt to rap went beyond the beats, fashions, and attitudes it borrowed. "Rap opened up a window on black music in general." claims singer

and producer Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds. "It introduced a lot of kids to R&B who would never otherwise have listened to it. White kids, in particular, started to listen to rap because it was the hip thing to do. And in so doing, they got more familiar with R&B artists because of the mixture of rap and R&B on many hip hop records."

Rap also lent R&B part of its audience.
The original generation of hip hop devotees couldn't stay young forever. Many are now

married, holding down jobs with responsibilities, or living in relative affluence. The call of the streets isn't as strong as it used to be.

"What happens when you used to be a gherto hip hop kid but have now figured out how to work in the system?" aks Harrell. "You're this cool 27-year-old and you don't want to become this comy colored sort of guy. So you start listening to R&B with a hip hop flavor. Or you start listening to Babyface as well as DC. Dr. Or

Finally, R&B has also benefited from the dissatisfaction that some felt with the increasingly violent and misogynist turn that hardcore aptook after the arrival of N.W.A. "Kids are tired of being afraid of other kids," says Harrell. "They don't want to worry all the time about getting shot or having to shoot someone. When you go to an R&B concert, they're nor rilling up the audience to go bannass. They're singing about love, which calms down the guys and brings in the ladies. R&B represents a calmer kind of thing—a transition from knucklehead mode to getting-with-the-girls mode."

A melodic respite from the harsh sonic textures of hardcore rap; a soothing sanctuary from grim reality; a music that deals with emotions other than rage. Whatever the appeal of R&B rdux, its popularity continues to grow. And as befits the hybrid nature of the music, its consumer base is diverse—black and white, male and female, young and old (Boyx II Men couldn't have sold 7 million albums or Color Me Badd 5 million albums without the aid of adult record buyers). In effect, the new R&B is a music without a core constituency—a true pop phenomenon in the sense that its prang directly into the limelight rather than journeying from the margins to the mainstream as rap did.

Three years ago, Andre Harrell predicted that the gap he sensed between the street culture represented by Def Jam and the bourgeois culture of, say, The Coaly Shour would be a very lucrative market niche to occupy in the future. What he didn't foresee was how readily the music's appeal would mushroom beyond the aspiring, nonrebellious working-class blacks he imagined would by his records.

"I've always thought of R&B as pop music," he says today. "I just didn't realize how pop the black-pop life would become."

Frank Owen is a contributing music editor at VIBE.

### THE YEAR IN HIP HOP

## HARD REIGN

Pop! go the gangstas as rap spins its wheels. by Alan Light

er's get one thing straight: In the world of hip hop, as of this year, "gangsta" equals "pop." In 1993, Ice Cube, Onyx, Naughty by Nature, and, above all, Dr. Dre scored Top losingles. The likes of Cypress Hill and Scarface joined them at the top of the album charts. These passionately hardcore acts sold millions of records—many, many more, lest we forget, than the "crossover sellours" they routinely strack.

This doesn't just mean albums by Cube and Cypress entering the charts at numberone. We realking about this production, intros by Kasey big radio hits, heavy MTV rotation, intros by Kasey Kesen, the rud popa uidence. And these tracks were up there for a reason too; "Slam," "Nuthin But a "G" Thang," and "It Was a Good Day" are great pop songs, complete with unforgettable hooks and glorious production.

But even as the hardcore margin conquered the mainstream, rap is mired in perhaps the greatest internal

conflicts of its history; it sometimes feels like the music is starting to swallow itself whole. In 1993, there was no 2 Live Crew trial, no "Cop Killer" or Sister Souljah brouhaha—no outside enemy against which hip hop could unify, circle the wagons, and fight back. Instead, the critics—like Reverned Calvin Butts and the Harlen human-rights ground that protested Dr. Dre's Chrunit cour—were largely black, sympathetic listeners grown tired of the way the battle to be the realest, the hardest has showed so many listeners to the side. Their methods may have been excessive fattempting to steamroll records is no way to advance an argument). but their emotions were easy to understand

Coming from the other direction, the hype that surrounded "alternative rap" last year got very quiet very quickly. This time, critics decided that after Digable Planets hit with "Rebirth of Slick (Cool Like Dat)," the fusion of jazz and hip hop would be the next big thing. "Cool" was a fine single, but despite the best efforts of Guru and the Jazzmataz project, 
"hip bop" wasn't exactly a revolution; sampling Art Blakey instead of 
James Brown and maybe growing a goatee is a style issue, not a genuine 
structural change."

Meanwhile, P.M. Dawn, the frequent target of attack from the "real hip hoppers," released the fascinating Bliss album, while it yielded seval hit singles, it never even approached the multiplatinum levels of the "underground hardcore shit." Kris Kross—and a rash of pubescent wannabe gangstas like Illegal and Da Youngsta's—discarded their poptoruses and "came back hard" with Da Bash, to widespread indifference. This year, there was something oddly refreshing about the popularity of records as blatantly stupid as "Dazzey Duks" and all those "Whoomp" songs.





Ultimately, 1993 was nuthin' but a Dre thang

Not that all was lost in 1993. Run-D.M.C.—who already went through their disastrous "coming back hard" phase with Back from Hell in 1990returned with a knockout on Down with the King. Produced by a fleet of artists who grew up as Run-D.M.C. fans, the album got the kings from Queens back to the in-your-face, back-and-forth thyme style that won our hearts in the first place and proved that rappers could still be contenders ten years into the game. KRS-One also staged a strong, surprising comeback with Return of Da Boom Bap. Less fortunate was L.L. Cool J, whose lackluster 14 Shots to the Dome continued his career's two-stepsforward/one-step-back pattern.

Some of the most encouraging signs this year came from a new breed of Old Schoolers, including Oakland's Hieroglyphics crew (which includes Souls of Mischief, Casual, and Del the Funkyhomosapien), the Pharcyde (from L.A.), and Brooklyn's Lords of the Underground. These kids all stepped to the mike with funky, clever rhymes, long on freestyle skills and short on attitude. And best of all was the return of De La Soul and A Tribe Called Ouest, both of whom stripped down their attack and made records that manage to be both innovative and accessible in the best hip hop tradition.

Going well beyond the obvious, both groups spoke eloquently of rap's most inescapable, elusive political crisis: the politics of identity. In a line sure to characterize (and, perhaps, caricature) De La's Bubloone Mindstate as

much as the daisies represented 3 Feet High and Rising, at one memorable moment Posdnuos says-pleads practically-"Fuck being hard, Posdnuos is complicated."

But in the end, there's no way around the fact that 1993 was Dr. Dre's year. Hands down the best producer in the business. Dre could be heard out of every passing jeep, on every street corner, and-more surprisingly-on music video channels every few minutes for the entire year. only growing stronger as time went on. The Chronic entered the chart at number 27 on January 2, and, since the week after that, didn't fall out of the Top 20 until September. Thanks to Dre and his sonic masterpiece. hip hop went through the year in a haze of weed (OK, Cypress can claim some responsibility here, too) and a thick murk of P-Funk samples. And with a real rap sheet as long as his arm and an album whose final track concluded that "Bitches ain't shit but hoes and tricks," Dre's hardness. and with it his stardom, was unassailable.

It makes perfect sense that the one true superstar to emerge out of 1993's endlessly escalating game of hardness was Dre's lanky, magnetic sidekick Snoop Doggy Dogg. Peeking sidelong into the video camera, wearily drawling his rhymes over Dre's dense, fuzzed-out, rolling bears. Snoop's whole persona said, I don't need to stomp around, make mad faces, or vell to let you know how had I am. I've seen things you can't even imagine. Making no effort to show you how real he is, Snoop was unlike anything hip hop had ever seen-a sexy, mysterious outlaw, a rapping John Dillinger.

That image was sadly amplified when the deafening buzz that preceded the release of his Doggystyle album managed to turn Snoop's murder charge into yet another marketing angle. We may never know whether the shooting he participated in was an act of self-defense or not. What we do know is that another young black man is dead, and in a musical community where hardness is everything, that was one more thing that could help Snoop sell records.



s there a more reviled name in hip hop than that of Eazy-E? The breakup of N.W.A (which Eazy founded in 1986 with Dr. Dre, ke Cube, MC Ren, and Yella) and resultant artacks on wax from his former cronies, along with Eazy's ongoing legal battles with Dr. Dre and Dre's own stunning success with The Chronic, have made the once infallible Eazy look meek, defeated, ever nidiculous.

De's treent his The Boy" and its accompanying video caricarure Eury as a shuffling sellour while De sunta; Nigasy on grew up with ofn vene respect you ass. The Cube concluded his 1991 Death Certificate salum with "No Vaseline," in which he called Eurys "half-pint birth" and a "dumb nigger," and advised the other members of NWA to lynch him. Eury's strendances at white House Republican fundarises in 1991 and his appearance earlier this year at the side of Theodore Briseno, one of the Lox Angeles police officers charged with the beating of Rodney King, have helped to further tarnish his reputations so one of rap's ortizal energy.

Nevertheless, Eazy (née Fric Wright), £50 and president of Comprown Records and its ubsidiary, Ruthless Records, is one of the most successful black businesspeople of the hip hope rat. Located in an anonymous office past in upper-middle-class, treelined Woodland Hills, £dlifornia, and decorated with at least two dozen platinum and gold albums (ranging from NN Art ope prappers J. Fad and squeekg dvia Michel le), the Ruthless headquarties is a study in contrasts. Easy's Mapper-tile financis to behind a buse in the rylithly financied reception area. Desired in storewashed jeans, a palin white T-shirt, and a black White Soc cap. Easy scribbles a milessly on Ruthless letterhead, rugs at the ends of his pier-civeled Afro, or filis joil by through the pages of a magIt's been a little crazy, all the stuff that's been going on, but real slow too. At one point just stopped doing everything, stopped dealing with all the distributors and all the other record companies so I could just start my own thing. Basically that's what it is, 'cuz my deal at Priority wasn't happening, so I figured I'd stop everything until Jeet somes hit that I really wasn't haptening.

But you all have had several platinum records with Priority. What wasn't working?

We wasn't getting that respect that we should a had. If I come over there with some groups and I want to put them out, I think I should be able to put them out. But [Priority president] Bryan Turner thinks he's an A&R man or something. They didn't even have an A&R deartment, oeriod.

Basically is seemed to me like they split up the group N.W.A. Vou have a group that had one alloun out and it blows up. Then everybody else starts in with, "Well, dammit, you really rap real good, you should do a solo record." Stuff that we was goning set to later on anyway. Filling our heads up with "You should do this, you should do that." Bryan was probably the one that broke us up, you know, by doing all this shit.

So what helped N.W.A stay together for two more albums after Straight Outta Compton?

It was only that one. I wouldn't even say it was N.W.A really after that. I figure N.W.A would mean Ren, Ice Cube, Dre, and Yella. The second album, Efil4zaggin, was just me, Ren, Dre, and Yella. I think that if we do an N.W.A album it should be all of us. What kind of effect do we with N.W.A had on ran music?

We set some kind of trend or something and everybody else done come behind trying to do the same thing. You got Ice Cube, Snoop, all these other up-and-coming artists, basically they came

Dissed by former N.W.A mates Dre and Cube and scorned for associating with cops and Republicans, Eazy-E is rap's most popular punch line. But Kevin Powell finds that the original Boy N the Hood still makes no apologies—and tons of money.

azine, occasionally looking up while answering questions.

Displaying a journeyman's knowledge of the music industry, Easy-E quickly reveals a thinly veided obsession with the life and career of Dr. Dre. Stacks of photos of Dre as a member of the lipstick-and-late-clad World Class Wreckin 'Cru, his pre-N.W. Ag roup, are pulled out during the course of our talk, along with numerous documents and contracts revealing various business agreements between Dre and Easy. In spite of these gestures, though, Easy holds fast to the notion that he is no biter about the dissolution of his 13-vers friendship with Dre.

Contradicting himself inte and again, Easy alternately raisi against Dre and waves nonstalgiover the early days of N. W.A., genuinely longing for a reunion of the group's original members because it would have history. Although, admirably, Easy remains suspologetic and crue to his convictions even as they have drever his crew away from him, as unmistable seame of lonelidrever his crew away from him, as unmistable seame of lonelithat money, frame, and all the platinum and gold records in his office cart seem to consuer.

Why did you title this EP It's On (DE-Die) 187 Killa?

It's how I feel. On the streets, if you in the dope game and your homeboy did some shif like that he would be dead, Dre's got the whole world fooled like he was the hardest gangbanger, like he did all this strift, All the shif he talks abour on his labbum—selling dope, low-riding, and all that shift, he never did that in his life. When he hooked up with me, I go thin inno doing this other stuff. The first album he barely rapped. The second album we let him approve. And then all of a sudden he was the hardest motherfuse law out there and ain't never broke a law in his life, really, besides bestitus us on De Barnes.

What kind of year has this been for you?

down here from the same shit. I ain't heard no group like N.W.A yet, though.

How do you feel about Snoop?

Snoop is a person that ain't never really met me, never really knew me, just riding off of Dre—"OK, Dre, let's dis Easy." But really, Dre is riding off of Snoop, Snoop made that album happen. The whole world knows that. Snoop is the motherfucka that made that album happen and they are going to end up fucking him over, I ber'cha. I bet he probably didn't get roo much of his shift for it.

What do you think about Snoop's murder charge?

I don't know; they say he was the dirver of the vehicle and whoever the gay was that was fuckling with him, they shot not him, they we times in the back and they said that it was self-defense. When you shot somebody write in the back, you call that self-defense. Then you shot some convent of the time of the work of the some convended with the some convend shit to me. If you're gonns shot so somebody, shoot the motherfucks in the face, let him see it happen. They said guy had a gun, right, but if the guy had a gun he would have did something with it, is, the him or something, not run.

Have you ever been in a similar situation?

I've been through all kinds of shit, man. I've been in and out of jail about 40 times.

How do you respond to the people who say that N.W.A was just an act? It was no act. Not to me. All the shit we rapped about, I been

through. Everybody else, they either rapped in the third person or just rapped about shit that goes on. I done been through all this shit.

I want to say each of their names, and you tell me your relationship with them now. Start with Ren.

Ren? He's cool, he got an album coming out some time soon on Ruthless.



So the breakup of the group basn't affected your relationship with him?

Naw, Ren's still here, Yella's still here. Ice Cube is doing his thing with Priority, but we cool still. I talk to him every now and then. Dre is doing his own thing—I would say he's caught up living his fantasy right now to tell the truth.

Which is what?

Whatever he's talking about, thinking that he's tough. De wan server like that, he was from the Wold Class Weckin' Crus—they wore lipstick, lace, cyelience, eyeshadow, all that kind of suff. And now all of a sudden he's hardcore. He's rapping about other souff that someholy des probably put him up on, 'cuz he was never around, he was never from the streets, he was never around, he was never around no doop, he was never around no gang stuff, he never was from no projects, nothing, never. He was never like that:

People say that rap music is a lot about creating myths. How much has N.W.A participated in that? If you're saying that some members were speaking in the third person...

Some of them was. Ren was right there in everything. kee Cube was in another part, but he knew about everything that was going on. The only person it was really new to was probably Dre. 'Cuz Dre was used to going our and doing all this Cabbage Patch shit, looking fly and wearing biker shorts and boxing shoes and Cabbage Patch cutout flip shirts and shit like that.

You said that you and Ice Cube talk every now and then, so the stuff that he said on his second album about N.W.A, specifically about you and Jerry Heller, you don't hold any grudges for that?

Let him make his money, it don't matter, Just like Der, he's out there, he's talking all that shir about me and everything. I figure they gotts have somebody to talk about to make people notice, pay attention. I figure, these niggas got money, right? From record sales and everything else? If I fucked them, why they didn't stue me? That's the first thing I woulda did, sue 'em, you know.

Speaking of sning, let's talk about the Deep Cover soundtrack and the legal problems that started with you and Dre from there. What was that about?

Dre was and still is under contract with Ruthless Records. So he went out and did the Deep Cover record without us authorizing him to do it, so that's how that started.

How long is his contract for?
For about six, seven years. I make money off his

album and everything he produces.

So your suit is basically saying that he needs to honor his contract, and not do things for other people, including Death Row Records?

We let him do stuff for Death Row, we like loaned him to them, but we still make money off him, so it's cool. [At press time the lawsuit was unresolved, and Dre and his lawyer were unavailable for comment].

Can you see him ever in the studio for a Ruthless Records project at this point?

Maybe one day he might come crawling back when he sees everything falling apart. You see everything falling apart as the pening over there now. They just started up about six or seven lawsuits. You got this murder that Snoop was involved with and all that stuff. I think it's gonna fall apart to tell you the truth.

You're smiling a little bit.

Well, you know, when you fuck people you get fucked over, seems like to me. We'll see how long it lasts. I'm happy he's out there selling records and everything. It pays my bills, shit.

Who owns Ruthless?

Me. I'm the sole owner. I own Comptown Records.

and Ruthless is like a subsidiary.
So what is Jerry Heller's role in your career?

So what is Jerry Heller's role in your career?

I would say he's the general manager. He is my personal manager. Jerry used to be Dre's manager before he was mine, Dre and Ice Cube. They turned me on to him It's been like that ever since.

What kind of relationship do you have with him? Jerry is like a father to me.

Jetry is like a father to me.

So rumors that he rums Ruthless and you're just a figurehead are not true?

Naw, man. That's bullshit. You hear people saying all this he-say/she-say shit. But really I don't give a fuck, you know. Het them talk and say all the shit they want to say.

Why did you do an EP instead of an album?

Just to put out something for right now. I got like

50 or 60 songs, I was going to do a double album. But different shit comes and goes with the times and as time goes along, you can't be sitting on some songs you did a while ago and it's not that same shit happening on the streets.

Tell me about you and Officer Briseno at the L.A. federal trial with Rodney King.

Basically, I went down there, I was going down to the trial tosit in on it. I was invited no tome down there. I was in the studio working on my own album at the time so I tooke a little break, went down there. My lawyer happened to be representing Brisenos on he introduced me to Briseno, right? So I met him, I'm talking to him and trying to find out what really went on.

They sent me the FBI tapes to view the Rodney King beating. Out of the whole beating, Officer Brisino was the only person I seen that was trying to go jo i. I seen thin do a stomp on Rodney King, but when the officers were trying to beat Rodney King, but Bettenoi jumped in finer trying to Block them. That is the only thing I said and by me sixting down there undirected the rodney with the self-week the se

Didn't you take some pictures with him?

Yeah, I was there, so if I'm walking with him, you know how the media is going to take pictures. I'm not taking any sides or anything but I am saying I seen it and I thought it was fucked up. The media chopped shit up and they make it how they want to make it but it wasn't really like, "Oh, Eazy is kicking it with this police officer." I have friends that are police officers, but we all know what we do and if I ran dope here and everything, I mean, my friend the police officer is going to fuck with me. I am not saying this man was actually my friend and I was there supporting him and saying everything that he did was right. But he even had it to a point where three other officers turned on him. They were trying to blackmail him because he was telling the truth about what went on.

Between that thing with Officer Briseno and the thing with the Republican Party a couple of years ago, are you concerned about your perception in the black community at this point? OK, let me tell you about that. That Republican shit, I ain't no Republican, OK?

What are you?

Really, I ain't shir. If I was going to be something I would be a Democrat, you know. I am on this thing called Athletes and Entertainers for Kids, Makes-Wish Foundation, and I donate money to kids, mothers on odpe, they don't have parents, shir like that. So my name is pulled off that list of people that give donations, and I was like, OK, If I go or this shir, just to see what it was, see what it was about and probably shock the shir out of a lot of people.

We went by yourself?
It was me and my manager, we just went. I knew
it was going to start some this by them letting me go
down there, like how on you let this goy come down
here and he sings a song called "Fack tha Police"? The
people were like, we didn't know, we didn't know
who it was, it was like some clowning shit. I cam
beck home and it was on the news, thoy were like.
The word of the good of the good of the good of the good of the
like to dearn on the table. It was all on the news. On

every station. I paid 15 hundred dollars for a million dollars' worth of press. Is Jerry Heller a Republican, as far as you know? Naw. I figure motherfuckas that are Republican

be them rich motherfuckas, real rich. Really, I just went to start some shit. Are you concerned about bow you're perceived in the black

community? Yeah

I mean, how do you feel when black people start talking about the Republican thing?

I tell them. I tell them just how it is. But really, I don't give a fuck what people say, you know? I don't. But you just said that you are concerned with how the black community feels.

Yeah, but when you sit down, they understand after you explain shit to them. If that is the case I could have took my ass up there with Clinton when they had their little party with Michael Jackson. That seemed like some bullshit to me, though.

So what does Eazy-E stand for in '93, in '94?
Take this shit back to the streets the way it's supposed to be done.

Are you talking musically?

Musically, everything. All that shit is real, though.

What is real to you?

We know what is real and what is fake. See, I give
Dre credit where credit is due. The album is cool, the
music is cool. That's all that counts, basically, I fyou

got some good music and motherfuckas like it they're going to buy it. But he's an actor, it's an act. Some people would say you have a preoccupation with Dre.

What do you mean?
Your album has his name on it and you're talking about
this contract you have with him, you keep coming back to him.

I'm just telling the real. I'm just telling you that he's a fake, phony, and a fraud. He's out there low-riding now. That's something I did back in '86, but all of a sudden it's new to him. Basically, he's a studio gangsta. That's what I call him, a studio gangsta.

Are you hurt at all that your relationship with him has youe downhill in the last couple of years?

Naw, Not at all. I just keep going. I'm not going to let anybody stop me, you know?

### Salt-N-Pepa

the hip-hop legends that gave you

"Let's Talk

About Sex,"

Your Man,"

"Push It," and

"Do You Want Me" are back

with their longawaited album

Very Necessary,

### Very Necessary Facts:

\* It's the ladies' turn to knock some boots with

"Shoop," the first vicious single. Check out the video on MTV, BET and THE BOX.

\* Second single "Whatta Man" features En Vogue

The album has 11 of the hottest S-N-P cuts

Push the bottom to start the explosion at your favorite record outlet with Salt-N-Pepa's new album VERY NECESSARY

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Janagement: Idelmakers





### TRASH

—and no one—is sacred. Robert Hofler takes them to lunch and lets them loose.

or playing a lesbian on Roseanne. In September she published her second book, titled, ironically, Love, Love and Love (HarperCollins). He just released his first comedy album, titled not so ironically Race (StepSun), a compilation from his touring one-man show.

Recently they met up for a quick tunch at Ben Frank's on the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood. The restaurant has a peculiar cache in town, being home turf for a lot of stand-ups who perform down the street at the Comedy Store and, more important, staying open past 10 p.m., unlike the rest of L.A. This is where Mooney and Bernhard used to have breakfast at two, three in the morning. It's familiar territory, perhaps to of amiliar.

Bernhard, who arrives early, orders a turkey club. She quickly abandons the half-eaten sandwich, then rejects a bowl of vegetable soup, pushing it in the direction of the fowl. Later on, uninvited, she picks at Mooney's Chinese salad, and thinks back. "One night we went dancing, Paul was wearing cowboy boots and I was wearing high heets and Paul walked out after dancing and said, "Now I know why there was no nigger cowboys." And I said, "Now I know why there was no Jewish hookers."

VIBE: The editors want you to talk about race and sex and comedy.

Bernhard: [With mock outrage] We don't want to talk about any of that. It's the same old shit. Tell them to go fuck themselves.

Mooney: Let's talk about Michael Jackson.

Bernhard: No, let's not talk about Michael Jackson. Who gives a shit, anyway? No, let's talk about Yasir Arafat and his crazy ass.

Mooney: I don't know why they're so upset with Michael for liking 13-year-olds.

Bernhard: I guess the fact that they're not girls.

Mooney: I guess so.

Bernhard: I don't think he's sleeping with them either.

Mooney: No, he's not. If you would have told me he was making it with the giraffe, I'd have believed it. He's that kind of weirdo. But not children. It's all a setup—that's why that Jewish lawyer backed off.

Bernhard: I don't Know it she's Jewish, honey.

Mooney: You know how they change their names. Michael Landon, they all do. They change those names, honey, and they' is like the light-skinned blacks, trying to pass. They all do it. The goyim's got them all freaked out. Everybody wants to be a Polly. Polly wants a cracker.

Bernhard: It's so true. [She checks out the menu again.] So Paul, what have you been doing? Want something to eat? It's always farm fresh here at Ben Frank's.

Mooney: Let's see. Like the old days, we had the vegetable soup and the Chinese salad.

Bernhard: No, the French toast because we used to eat here in the middle of the night.

Bernhard: No, the French toast because we used to eat here in the middle of the night.

Mooney: Feeding all of those comics who've been forgotten.

Bernhard: You used to pay for them?

Mooney: I was the only one working.

Bernhard: Except me. [To the waitress] The vegetable soup for me.

Mooney: And the Chinese salad.

Waitress: With blue cheese on the side?

Mooney. Yeah, I don't really like to discuse race with, dewish people because two minorities in a burning house don't have time to stop and argue. We have to get moving. Eveny-dewish person I have a close relationship with, they say, "You look like my uncle, You look like my cousin." And they are not trying to be cute when they say it. They are being honest.

Bernhard: I've always said Mooney is like a black Paul Newman. He's a dead ringer for Paul Newman, who's a Jew. For me, it's never been a problem. I don't know where it all started breaking down. I just like to think of it as the way it was.

### BERNHARD: HOLLYWOOD NEVER GIVES ME ANY SPECIAL AWARDS. PEOPLE LIKE JODIE FOSTER GET THEM ALL.

Moorey: In the old Biblical days, I think there was no problem

Bernhard: The Semitic people are just a step away from being black.

Mooney: A breath away. I never heard of "Hymie" until Jesse Jackson said it. It sounded so much like "stymie" I was confused.

Bernhard: Let's call a spade a spade, no pun intended-lesse Jackson is not one of the brightest people in the world

Mooney: I don't know how he can be

a politician and be on relevision too. Bernhard: Exactly.

Mooney: And then open in Vegas in a musical. [Bernhard goes into convulsive laughter. H don't understand, Jesse's at every opening. You open a can of beans and Jesse's right there. "Mmmm. Smells good."

Bernhard: Jesse and Chevy, "The Jesse Chase Show."

(Lunch is served, Bernhard checks out her bowl of vegetable soup, which is sans the necessary utensil.] Can I get a spoon or do you just inhale from a straw?

Mooney: There is a hidden one, honev. A hidden spoon.

Bernhard: Anyway, the soup's got to be better. The turkey is not rockin' and

Mooney: It's not rockin' and rollin'. Bernhard: Rollin' in my gut. What's with the food here today? It's been a while since I've been to Ben Frank's. Now I know why. I think this turkey's looking for its home.

Mooney: [He watches as her soup goes the way of her turkey club. 1 I thought you'd be at this women's thing

Bernbard: What women's thing? Mooney: Something about women in

media? Bernhard: Women in Film. Oh, the one where Iodic Foster is getting her 30th award for something. They would never invite me. They are terrified of me.

Mooney: Oh, please, I saw her at Goodwill. Bernhard: At the Goodwill, huh?

Mooney: She was hot, honey. Looking for old clothes and smelling like them. [Much chortling] Bernhard: They don't give me any special awards. I don't know why not. I am the only woman in this town who incorporates politics and intelligence and balls into her work and they don't give me any awards! In the meantime, all these people like Jodie Foster and all these actresses who do these sexist bullshit films .... Because they have the power to get the green

light to produce these films, they get awards. You

explain it to me. I don't know why. Maybe I'm too political roomstroken roomal for them. I don't fir into their little blond WASP, little petite category. You have to be one of two things: a WASPy little blond who is not threatening or a self-deprecating lew who behaves like Fanny Brice.

Mooney: You remember when we used to go to the movies and just watch them for fun? The old Ann-Margrets and all that stuff. Now you come out like a

zombie. This dinosaur thing [Jurassic Park] was hilarious to me. People kept saying, "It looks so real." I was saving, "How did they come to that conclusion?" When was the last time somebody saw a real dinosaur? It looked fake and Japanese

Bernhard: The great Godzilla. The only thing missing was Raymond Burr, rest his soul. Can you believe Raymond Burr died?

Mooney: Raymond Burr and Hervé Villechaize. You know they go in threes. We will have to wait and see. Raymond and Hervé. Someone's next.

Bernhard: What a combo! Mooney: Sounds like something from Denny's. Bernhard: Honey, you want anything else to eat?

Mooney: I don't know. Bernbard: Eggs with a pedigree? Mooney: Let's eat something life-like.

Resultand: Engir salad? Baked French onion soun? Mooney: You know. I don't think they know how to light Wesley Snipes in movies. I think it's a running gag. They cut the lights whenever he's on. I saw him in Boiling Point. He was sitting in this bar, and it's like the cigarette was smoking itself. In Rising Sun he was so dark he made Sean Connery look Creole. They have to learn to light him. In this new movie De-

> molition Man, it's all peace and love set in the future with Wesley being from the violent '90s. They thaw him out and he goes to the museum, takes the guns. and starts shooting people. So they thaw out what's-his-name, Sylvester Stallone, a cop, to go get him. They have all that storyline just to get Rambo Chases Sambo. Waitrest: Is everything OK?

Bernbard: Yeah, I'm all right, I'm not great, frankly, But thanks,

Mooney: Bring that menu back Bernhard: Yeah, that one and the

menu from Le Dôme, please, Mooney: Remember our waitresses?

We had fun with those waitresses Remember the one who was inheriting a million dollars? Bernhard: No.

Magney: Remember the old one who cracked up in the end?

Bernhard: I don't remember. [As Bernhard blanks out on the waitresses in her and Mooney's past, a pall settles over the table 1

VIBE: Despite your initial objections, you've pretty much covered sex and race. Now how about comedy? Have audiences in the comedy clubs changed? Are there any taboos left?

Mooney: Abortion, Sexual preference. That's raboo. You want to get a jolt, talk about that onstage and the audience will

laugh out of nervousness and laugh real hard. They try to make abortion a religion. What does it have to do with? It has to do with the white man in power. It's his power. That is why women couldn't vote. Power. That is why blacks couldn't vote. Power. It is to be controlled. A man doesn't have a pussy so he wants to control one. It's hers. She can do whatever she wants with it. Have a baby, not have a baby. Let somebody screw it, not let somebody screw it. She owns it. But the white man wants to own and control everything. If men had babies tomorrow, the white man would fix it so that you could drive into lack in the Box and have a hamburger, french fries. and get an abortion. And hold the Happy Meal, that won't be necessary.

Bernbard: And shove right on. Mooney: It's all weird. Just like you have blacks

### MOONEY: OH, PLEASE, I SAW HER AT GOODWILL. LOOKING FOR OLD CLOTHES AND SMELLING LIKE THEM.

who I call coons, happy slaves, Uncle Toms... Bernhard: You have Uncle Women.

Momey: Uncle Women! They are women but they will do absolutely anything with men to make them happy. Just like Uncle Tom does for the white man. "Uhh, uhh, yes saw, boss, I'll be a woman. I'll do whatever you want. I'll throw my legs up." Sharon Stone is an Uncle Woman. She is the Queen of the Uncle Wo-

Bernhard: She says that she wants powerso she can manipulate more powerful men.

Mooney: She's a tramp, and there is no way around it. I hope her mother is not still alive. Spreading her legs up onscreen. That's sexy?

Bernhard: She's in good company.
Monoy: I'm even mad at Janet [Jackson] for showing her breasts. She
didn't have to do that. She's freaking
out. It is our society that seduces. The
girl has to get a check on who she is. Jane
Fonda played a prostitute [in Klute] and
didn't show ou anything.

Bernhard: Well, that was a hot movie.

Mosony: It's called acting.
Bernbard: I got to tell you a funny
thing about Janet, Jackson. In this intertive, I had said some nice things about
her acting in Peatic Jastice. Well, at this
MTV party her boyfriend comes sliding
over to me and says, "We read what you
said about Janet. Did you say those
things or did your public its say them?"
Says, "Do I look like the kind of person
who would allow their publiciat so
peak for them?" To say nice things
about Janet Jackson in an interview, like
I would have something to gain or lose
I would have something to gain or lose

Mooney: He didn't know what to say

Bernhard: She didn't either because we were standing there—me, Roseanne (Arnold), and Laurie Metcalf. I was trying to make her feel good, then she goes, "Well, I guess I don't know what to say." Try just standing here chitchatting, honey. Work on your social praces."

Monory: It's the fame that does it. They begin to believe their own reviews I, want to get back or Shamon Stone. There are a lot of Uncle Wemen running around just like there are a lot of Uncle Toms. Let me show you about gay rights, women's rights. Blacks will always try and bring the sheep back into the fold. They will plead and carry on. If a white person gets out of the fold, white people don't plead for them to come back. They go, "OK, you like niggers, then you're a nigger-lover and we hate you more than we hate the

niggers." You come out of the fold and your white card gets torn up.

Bernhard: That's right.

Mooney: That's how vicious it is. You don't believe me. Try it and see what happens. What's so sad is that the sexual thing has always caused problems in our society. Those Romans were big freaks. They ruled the world in miniskirts. And the Western world is a spin-off from all of that. This is just Rome. When

white card

Benhard: Beause they're so our of control in white
culture? And it is their one way of having some kind
of power?

Mooney: Right.

Bernbard: I just think [homophobia] is more startling coming out of the black community. It's like minority against minority.

Mooney: It's like, "You black, you gay, you this."
People in our society live in this dream world. People
think there aren't any racial problems.

They see blacks on TV. They think it has all changed.

Bernhard: I don't think people are that naive.

Mooney: People have pencil memo-

Bernhard: Honey, come on. It seems to me that people are more aware of it mow because there are so many alternative outlets for discussing this stuff on TV. Some of these right-wing extremists come out and call blacks "niggest," call Jews 'kykes," call gays 'dykes' and 'Faggots. T' You see it all the time. I am just saying there is more of an awareness.

Mooney: Let's hope so.

Bernhard: I am not saying that it's making it any better. I just think people are more vocal,

Waitress: Any dessert here?

Mooney: Sure. Chocolate ice cream.
Bernhard: Yeah, a chocolate malt.
But no whipped cream. [To Mooney]
What man's show were you on?

Mooney: Geraldo...

Bernhard: [Total shock] When were you on Geraldo? Why didn't you tell

you on Geraldo? Why didn't you tell me? Mooney: Oh, they want to kill you!

Bernhard: Me?!
Money: Remember when you turned them down?

Bernhard: When was this?

Mooney: Long time ago. Remember when we were all supposed to go and do that thing on race and women's rights and stuff?

Brmbard: I wouldn't step a foot within a hundred yards of that freak. I don't want to do any of those shows. Where can you go once you're sitting there with this man, Geraldo Rivera' Except to take a club and beat his head in (Mooney Jaughs uncontrollably.] I mean, this is a rational man who's going to talk things over in a calm...

Mooney: [Still laughing] He tried to hug me. Bernbard: Oh, what a freak!

Robert Hofter is the managing editor of Buzz magazine in L.A. and a frequent contributor to Vibe.



comics do gay jokes, the people just laugh. It's just so easy and so cheap and the audience just falls right out.

Bernhard: Paul, let me ask you something now out of curiosity. Why is the black community homophobic? Why are they so completely freaked out by homosexuality? Like the rappers.

Mooney: It's a macho thing in the black community, our [having] to connect with the white community. That's the fear black men have, a real fear of that whole thing because of the prison system and of

being a punk and you'll get screwed and... Bernbard: Literally?

Mooney: Yeah, so it is a real weird thing. Very macho. That's why in the rap community you hear "birch" a lot. It's a control thing.







# GUNS AND

### ROSES

Like Al Green and Marvin Gaye before them, the new jack balladeers in Jodeci are struggling with a dark side their sweet songs can't hide. Tom Sinclair traces their journey from Carolina choirboys to Uptown love gangstas.

### Photographs by Albert Watson

is a steamy August night, and three-fourths of Jodeci—K-Ci, JoJo, and Mr. Dalvin—are hangling around outside Manhartan's Hit Factory sharing a bortle of Boone's Farm apple wine and a bag of pork rinds. De Vante Swing, the main songawiter and producer, is nowhere to be seen. Although Jodeci is comprised of two sets of siblings, the group seems to socialize separately. De Vante holds himself apart, usually arriving at the studio hours after the others.

The group have been feverishly working to complete, their sophomore album, due before year's end. If. Dalvin has been sitting in the producer's chair for the album's uprempo tracks, with DeVante handling production on the ballads, which still constitute the bulk of Jodec's output.

The Jodeci sound—lush love songs with lots of whispered sweet nothings and declarations of need—is characteristic of the piningly sincere R&B balladry that rap would seem to have all but obliterated. Yet rather than seeming obsolere ordid-fashioned, Jodeci have made that sound hip again, scoring hits with saccharine fare like "Forever My Lady," "Come & Talk

to Me," and their recent live rendition of Stevie Wonder's "Lately." All of these young men served time singing in North Carolina gospel groups as teenagers, and that early training is readily apparent in the sweet and soulful vocals of brothers K-Ci and JoJo.

Much of their success, however, clearly lies in their fashion sens. "Nentry-five years ago, record companies would've dictated that a group like Jodeci wear suits, grin a lot, and ear humble pie. Today, their label, Uptown Records, encourages the group's pencheat, for wearing boots and hip hop gear, and racirly codones lodecis 'image as "the bad boys of Reb."

Industry southebut has it that Jodec were coached heavily in marters of style and articude by flambour heavily in marters of style and articude by flambour town Jenon "Puffy" Combs, who still serves as the group's unofficial method to the still serves as the group's unofficial method agreed part in developing the group's visual style as agreat part in developing the group's visual style as well as its artitude. He put them in the boots and hats and stuff."

But, Harrell points out, before Puffy ever came on the scene, Harrell had already moved them into his old Bronx neighborhood with the express intention of acquainting the four country boys with the rawness of the New York streets.

Ir obviously worked. Indeed, the three young men hanging outside The Hir Factory, talking loud and acting proud, could pass for New York homeboys any day of the week (though to be totally convincing, they would need to trade in that Boone's Farm for a 40 of Older E).

Their road manager, Smooth, seems eager to get on with the conversation, if only to get the bottle of Boone's Farmout of sight. Husted into a plush roam inside the studios, KC, Ija, Joa, and Mr. Dalvin each dutifully take their turn sitring still to be interviewed. One hour with three-fourths of Jodet's goes something like this. The new about scoming along converting like this. The new about scoming along God and our parents, fine's blued to does! with, and we miss Puffy—you know we do—but we didn't fire the nigga.

All three, of course, give God His props.
"Everything we know we got from church," says



JOJO: 'FAME'S HARD TO DEAL WITH' Suit by Yohji Yamamoto; sweater, Comme des Garçons; Foot Locker cap.



K-Ci, "and we just want to thank God for that. We're never too busy for God; He understands that we're trying to make it down here."

The story of Jodec's rapid rise to the top is enough to shore up anybody's belief in God: Sometime in 1989, two sets of teenage brothers set out from their North Carolina hometown for the Big Apple. Armed with little more than brawado and a demo tape, they talk their way into the office of an A&R guy at MCA's fledeline black-music label. Uptown Records.

They play the demo, which fails to bow lover Mr. ARR, it does, however, carch the attention of rapper Heavy D, who just happens to be within earshot. Heavy, in turn, corrals Uptown founder Andre Harrell into giving these kids a lister. Harrell asks them to audition on the sport, and is impressed to see that the quarter can put their dreamy Rak Bullads across live.

Contracts are signed, the group is put in "development," and in 1919 his ringler Forever My Lady" and album of the same name appear and do great things on the Billboard charts. I help set a im motion—and in many ways defines—the look and sound of the new wave of young, black male vocal groups (Boya II Men, H-Town, Shai, Silk). In stort order, Jodeci become Black Beat pinup boys, buy homes in New Jersey, and everyone makes a loof of money.

By all rights, Joede: should have been stirting as pretty as the bow in a renderon's wave. But then these, th, disconcerting stories began floating around the industry. Like the one about how Joede: sexually ly harrassed and abused the female members of one of their vides oboos, frazzling one young stylists to such an extent that she quit the business entirely. For a time, K-C was linked comantically with Uptown labelmate Mary J. Blige (which he denies). Then came the (surprisingly quie to new that De Vante and K-C lab had been charged with sexually assaulting an 18-year-old woman at gunpoint last April.)

In the midst of these bombshells, Jodeci appeared on the nationally televies del Bilbard Music Albard and show looking and acting like they'd come straight, out of Compton instead of Charlotte: swaggers, smoking, and strutting like a crew of wannabe gangstrapers, which was a structing like a crew of wannabe gangstrapers, where these really the same velvex-order lads who sang those pretry ballads? What's wrong with this bicture?

Of course, the group insists, everybody's got a bone to pick with you when you're young, giffed, and black, not to mention rich and famous. "We try to be too friendly with people sometimes," says Mr. Dalvin. "We try to act like, okay, we're just like you, we just make music and people love us. We just wanna be regular," and people don't want to accept you as regular."

for De Varre Swing fails to show up in time for a number of scheduled interview, it's decided that a pilgrimage to his Trancek. New Jersey, home might be the not) way to hook up with the clussive producer/songwrizer. I'm accompanied by his publicies and a label seccusive, both of whom are uncertain whether the enther innocuous-looking sub-untain house we've arrived as it infleed De Vante's. Three tenenge gifts sixting on the front steps assure used to the state of the

A moment later, we're ushered inside to find the man himself up and about. It's 4 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon in September, and DeVante has been pulling a week of all-nighters in the studio. Sometimes he doesn't make it home before noon. Still, he seems alert, slightly wired, and in good humor.

Clad in baggy black shorts and unlaced Timber and boost, the land 20-year-old is rentrating visions in his kitchen. His bare chest and arms slipsly as collection of attoors that would put Alf Rose to shame. He roots through the contents of a recently lought bag off groots; a seeking slow for his affernoon interview. It's obvious he has a sweet onto: cupcakes, candy bars, Swee Tars, and a variety of other sugar-packed items fill the bag. It's also apparent he doesn't of much cooking, Still bangry after two cupcakes and a glass of milk, he impects a boot lipton Cup-2-Soups if the doesn't know quite what to do with it. "16, you know how to hook this what to do with it." Yes, you know how to hook this

DeVante confesses to being a little "paramoid" babul tetring strangers into his home. Earlier this summer, a trio of men broke in while he was saleep, a trio in men broke in while he was saleep, whipped and threatened to obsort on him, and made off with \$160,000 worth of jewelty. He responded to the incident by firing his personal assistants and security men and hired an all-new crew. As a result of the robberty. DeVante susy he has troublest leeping, and has begun carrying a 43 suromatte in cobe with him For Additional protection, he keeps there pix bulls—Chnonic, Stills, and a third as-yet-unnamed dog— on the premises.

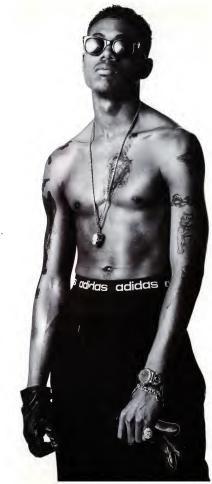
Although his house is sparsely comfortable there's a Jacuze juntains and half-finished recording studio in the basement—De Vante says he's planning to move to a larger place soon: To bought this house before 1 sold 2 million records; he says with a laugh. In the aftermath of the robbery, a new environment seems sensitial for De Vante's place of imid, unlike the other three members of Jodeci—all confirmed clubboppers—he tends to be a homebody.

"I could count the number of clubs I ve been to since I ve been in New York on one hand," he says. "I don't go out, don't have a lor of girls around me I. I write music, and that's whart I do I to homatic and I make a lor of money. Goin' out for me is a risk; there's a lor of jeslous people out there. The last time I went out a guy stepped up to me and said, "I don't like you' ouz my girl likes you. Every time she hearty your voice she goes crazy. I wanns fight you." I said, "Look, Money, that don't have nothing to do with me I just make records. 'See, I'm scared of what I might do to comedo." See, I'm scared of what I might do to clue I'm never out a lone—I'm always packin'. It's better for me to stay home."

But in view of recent events, even staying home done'n recessarily equate with staying out of frou-ble for De-Valne. On the evening of April 11, according to a narticle in Newards Star—Ladge, two young women a ccompanied K-Ci and some friends to De-Varnet's home after leaving a Manhattan night-club. (De-Varnet claims for leaving the Manhattan night-club. (De-Varnet claims to have been asleep when the group arrived at his door.) Our of the women subsequently filed a complaint alleging that De-Varnet had you at her and demanded the hove consultations.

She also alleged that K-Ci had threatened her and fondled her at gunpoint. Both K-Ci and DeVante

# YOU'D NEVER CATCH ME ROLLIN' WITH BOYZ II MEN, SAYS DEVANTE. OR SEE ANY OF US IN A BOW TIE.



DEVANTE SWING:
'IT'S BETTER FOR ME
TO STAY HOME'
Sweatpants by Comme
des Garçons; gloves by Emporio
Armani; Paul Smith sunglasses.

were charged with aggravated criminal sexual conract, aggravated assault, possession of a weapon, terroristic threats, and possession of hollow-nose bullets. (At press time, the matter was unresolved.)

"The newspapers said it was a sexual thing, but it wasn't, "says DeVanteo frhe incident. "Wasn't nothin sexual said to her. She said we pointed a gun at her, which we didn't. I had a gun in the house, she saw the gun, and she was upset crause wouldn't nobody take her home. We wasn't paying no attention to her, so she got mad and made up a sory."

Although Jodeck were the progenitors of 1993's explosion of new jack balladers, such peptrshelp to distance them from their competition. DeVante admires the vocal wizarday of Bogy II Men, for instance, "but they're definitely not the kind of niggas you'd cache me ollin' with. Void newer seamy-one in Jodec' in a bow tie." Most mainstream R&B, infact, strikes him a 'corny', 'his personal tastersun more toward hardcore rapand rock. "Tilke Guns N' Rocs,' he says." Tim into that articulude."

So here we have DeVante Swing: The armchair gangsta who'd rather stay home and clean his gun than go out and use it. The crafter of masterly R&B ballads who doesn't much like R&B. But who is DeVante really, away from the poses, the posse, and the studio skills?

The answer eeems to lie in his roots, and his roots are in the church. The former Donald DeGrete Jr. and his how the church. The former Donald DeGrete Jr. and his more interest to the church the former of the first t

"The only [secular] record my father did have in the house was Marvin Gaye's What's Going On, because it was kind of inspirational," recalls DeVante. "That was the closest to R&B I could play and ger away with it. I still love that record today."

By his own account, the teenage DeVante was a loner obsessed with music. Musically gifted (he plays 11 instruments), he began honing his talents early. Though they sang gospel music to please their father, he and his brother would sneak Prince capes into the house, listening on headphones late at night.

"Inever did any work in school," says DeVante. "I wrote songs all day. After sixth grade I never made an A or a B or a C, it was all D's and F's. Believe it or not, all through high school I never had a girlfriend. I had one girl in junior high school, but I only went with her like two weeks. Girls would be like. 'He's

not going to be anything, he's not going to college, fuck him, he's quiet, something's wrong...' But I knew what I wanted to do."

DeVanre's lifestyle today seems in many ways to be a direct reaction to the constraints of his teenage years. Tcouldn't dare walk into church with a tattoo on," he says. "I had to wait until I moved." At 16, DeVanre can away from home to Minneapolis, where he talked his way into a low-level job at Paisley Park Studios. He quit when it became obvious that he want going to be granted an audience with Prince.

When De Vante returned, he and Dalvin began collaborating on R&B-oriented material with another local set of brothers—Cedric and Joel Hailey who also sang goopel. Cedric and Joel Hailey who also were ground about their future assinging stars, but at De Vante's insistence, they recorded a demo tape of DeVante's original songs.

DeVance had big dreams, he talked Dalvin, K.-Ci, and Jojo into joining him on that fateful road trip to New York, demo in hand. The decision to try for the brass ring and their subsequent success may be an object lesson in the power of ralent, naïveré, and serendipity. But Jodeci may have other, graver lessons to learn.

After their own lives changed so dramarically, bedcei acquired the power to change other people's lives. Just ask Annette Daniels-Taylor. The former videostylist, who worked with the group on the video shoot for Tac's Go Through the Moritons' (for the Who's the Mann's soundtrack), says that the group's abusive behavior toward the women involved on the shoot convinced her to leave the business. (She now works as a fashion designer.)

During the chaotic shoot, which took place at a Long Island mansion last March, JoJo and K-Ci fondided and requested onal sex from a number of the models and extras who had been hired for the video, according to Daniels-Taylor. She also reports that "one of the girls said that a group member grabbed her in the dressing toom and was asking her for sexual services and displayed a gun."

In the seven years she worked in the world of music videos, Daniels-Taylor had been exposed to plenty of sexist actitudes fromarcists, but 'mot or that extreme.' Her husband, Rodney, who was also present at the shoot, asyst that the ramparal lastiviousness was 'unbelievable... (The behavior) was accepted by everyone: by their manager, by Puffy, by the director, by the assistant director. They just let them do what they wanted: it was like children in a condy store.'

(The group declined to comment on any reports about their behavior on the video shoot).

Andre Harrell says he has never heard anything

about the turbulent set of the "Motions" video. He concedes, however, that dealing with women might pose a problem for Jodeci:

"Whenever you have young men in an urban culture who have all this success and all these women, you're going to have situations that come up, and hopefully they don't get root out of hand, "ays Harrell." "Jodec i have a bud-boy image, but they come from God-fearing poople. They re still young boys. When you get thousands of screaming girls in every city, there'll be some situations that come up, and when you're a male sex symbol, there'll always be some issues [involving women]."

Harrell may be treading on politically incorrect ground when he suggests that it is the lost of the male ground when be suggests that it is the lost of the male R&B artist to suffer misfortune through women, but his argumen is now without historical precedent. Think of Al Green, scalded with a pot of hot grits by a pelous griffriend. Of Sam Gooke, sho to cleds thy a possible of the control of

Jodeci, of course, belong to a new tradition. Postrap balladeers with more than a passing interest in hip hop, they have by necessity internalized the misogyny and aggression of the gangstas. Such attitudes must sit uneasily on the souls of ex-churchbops. Because they're young, and because street credibility means so much to them, they've got concerns Luther Vandross doesn't. Yash, we ning about love, but we're not stiff, and we're got the gast and disks prove it.

Jodeci do indeed sing convincingly about low, but they approach the opposite sex with all the subtleys and finesse of, say, Bushwick Bill of the Gero 1998, if a scompains that De Marne ingle like He boass of his friendships with Eary-E and DJ Quik, and proudly describe secrent telephone conversations with Dr. Dr. and Snoop Doggy Dogg, I refest like He Blend over backwards to prove that he's down, to counter any conclusions you might draw about a counter any conclusions you might draw about a Southern chich'op singing sweet low songas—compensating in a way that apparently seems to spill over into Jodec's lives offsage.

Yet in spire of the guns, the scandal, the calculated B-boy styling, De Vone claims that he and his group have no emotional investment in being hard. In fact, he says, a hear they're really just nice guys. "We can associate with anybody," says De Vanter. "We'll hang out with anybody who wants to hang out in restaurants. We'll talk to any gird walking by no matter how ugly or fat she is, Jodec is like, fuck it, we're regular people." "D

### BECAUSE STREET CREDIBILITY MEANS SO MUCH TO THEM, JODECI HAVE CONCERNS LUTHER VANDROSS DOESN'T.

### The Mother Ship Has Landed At











some just play the

game.

others make the rules

ain't no equal ain't no frontin'

AIN'T

NO HER HARDEST, STREETWISE

YET FEATURING

"RUFFNECK" AND "I GO ON"

on tour

NOW with the Budweiser Superfest



# KiD

WHO ARE YOU?

All you ravers and techno kisk and androgynes and hip hopper and skarebounders with close-cropped hair (dyeld) wearing baggy jeans that make boys look like who knows what and girls like God knows what, all whiziring by, past all those girls with straighemed hair parted in the middle, tunniers pushed out, maybe Dazed and Confused (tha, ha) like who? Or maybe just like yourself, hip-huggers snag at the hip. What are you called? Generation X?

Whoever you are, you're made right here, in the good new U.S.A., the visual representation of this country's second youthquake, the first being in the '60s, (before you were born) when wearing what you wanted to wear was cool and loving who you wanted to love was cooler still.

It's the period, now, of the Great Infantilization! When everyone looks or tries to look younger than they actually are. Everyone, including the president, is known by a diminutive—Bill!—who's willing to alk about his whole potting because Bill—have you noticed?—is profoundly nonverball (is it the pott) and projects his distance with the power inherent in his office: authority. No own wants it any more featherity, so middle aged, middle least a thing it is. Who can be suffered to the suborbs. a gange, a dog, the psychiatrics? Who can relate? Can under, not it!!

And toward what? Whatever it is, it's everywhere: in every ponytail, oversize T-shirt, platform sneaker, blacks with whites, Koreans with Puerto Ricans.

One reason, maybe, for the return to adolescence is that the new generation has redefined race and class as issues, so much so that so few of you can be defined

as just black or Asian or Jewish or Puerto Rican, rich or poor-you're just you.

One reason, maybe, for the return to adolescence now is that the '80s were so so overstiffed with until that Americans dirfied into a kind of smug complaint of smug complaint. Then there was AIDs. Then there was Reagan's willful avoidance of AIDs. Then there was no longer the world as we had known it. There was sanders and in the reason as open and a some such a some such as the same such as suc

Who are you? In this brave new world where you curl up every night with Big Brother (technology now is culture) and are warmed by the rays of MTV, of techno, the deep bass of hip hop—is that you?

You don't seem to be desirous of anything except to create yourself and to connect with others interested in difference, just like you. Kid, do you need anything? Are you warm? What do you need? A little space away from the '80s and Mom's '80st dream for you—two kids, a home, Anglo comfort? What do you need? What have you figured out? Something of importance: that fashon is style, not always the garment. It's like the way you put yourself (ogether—inside and out—that looks so new, so different. It disht to cost a thing, you sometimes say, look like a waff in cohes so oversided the world can't get throught you, kid? You look like a waff in cohes so oversided the world can't get throught you, kid? You look like the way we live now make up from pieces of this and that combined celf to someone cles' singulation. You look like survival, but with style. You definitely look like the way we live now. But who knows? Something else might be coming up.

—Hilloo Alt





Janole, 18, in cream angura cropped top from Barbation Army, red nylon panties with white piping by Lollingon, Blowopo by Charms. Photographed by Kevin Hatt. Produced by Hitlon Als. Shiping by Simons Collisa. Additional production by Dary'l Turner. Hatr by Dennier. Hatr by Charles. Additional production for Vartial Salon. Makeup by Lai Rivette for Archard and Associates. For more fashion information see "The Details."



left, in top and bellbottoms by Pow Wow. Robbie, 19, right, in vest by Patricia Field; tights by The Gap. Photograph by Dah Len. Styling by James Green. Hair by Dennis Lanni for Vartali Salon. Makeup by Matthew Sky for Vartali Salon.









Janela in romper by Nikka; glass baby bracelet and bottle, Gerber's.





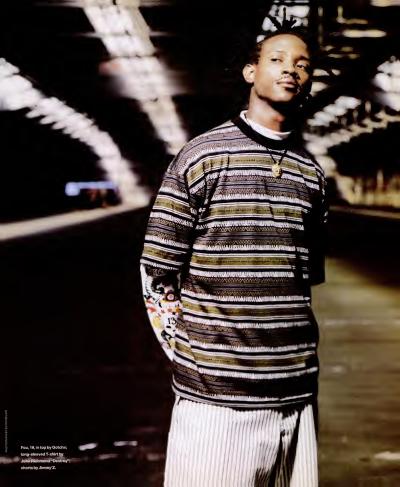


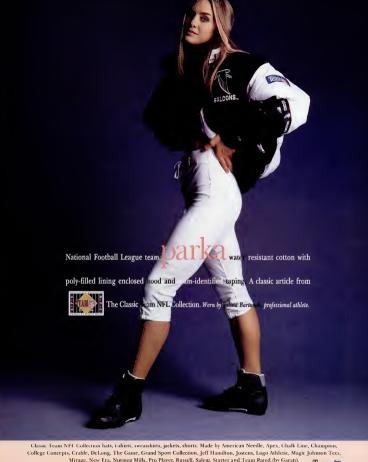
Rachel, 21, in horsey bit by Body Worship Makeup by Chanel.











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National Football League polar fleece Dallas Cowboys pullover with zip-up collar worn by Pete Sampras, tennis player.



**END ZONE THEORY** 

## The

# JOWBO!

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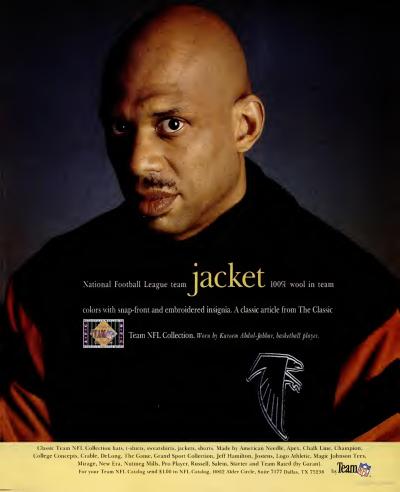
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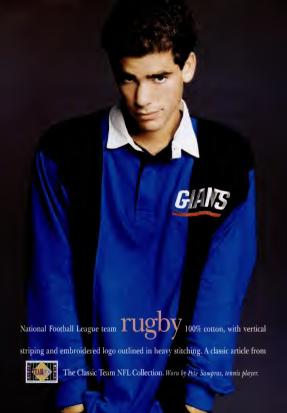
the team sport of the figsome tough you in of fashionable ffering sport it is ided to raise it design of game-day ashion conscious fan. National Football League team genuine leather bomber worn by Dara Torres, Olympic swimmer. SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

# **The Play**

TO THE STATE OF TH

The coach called for the Classic Team N.L. Collection. A step beyond football looks brought to fashion, this Classic line a lows the fans to experience the pride of supporting their favorite team, while looking damn good in the process.









SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

## **Execution**

While the competition imply a tempts to imitate the NFL, the Classic Team NFL Collection is an original. The line hits hard with a specially-resigned series of logos, patches, and artwork to open holes in the world of sportswear for the fashion-minds (NFL fan to up through.

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

National Football League team T-shirt and shorts, 100% ribbed cotton with team logo, worn by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Cowboys fan.

Touchdown

We're talking about the tradition of 30 teams, playing America's favorite game, combined with the classic look that the fans have come to demand. With the legacy of the NFL, plus styling that defies convention, the Classic Team NFL Collection sends a strong message to the others who want to capitalize on the fans of football: if you are going to step on the tield, be prepared to get hit.



Classic Team NFL Collection hast, schirts, sweatshirts, jackets, shorts. Made by American Needle, Apex, Chalk Line, Champion.

College Concepts, Crable, DeLong, The Game, Grand Sport Collection, Jeff Hamilton, Jostens, Logo Athletic, Magic Johnson Tees,

Mirage, New Era, Nutmeg Mills, Pro Player, Russell, Salem, Starter and Team Rated (by Garan).

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### it's not easy being

# QUEEN

She's got a hit TV show, a movie, several businesses, and a new album.

But with the sudden death of her brother, and her recent dismissal from Tommy Boy Records,

Latifah's really had it up to here. By Lucy Kaylin

### Photographs by Stefane Sednaoui

the series and such thing as downtime anymore in the seriously overbooked, 23-year-old life of Jeney's own superwoman, Queen Latifah. Töday, for instance, in the lousy shank of an L.A. afternoon on the set of her new Fox sitcom, Living Stangk, a bet spends a hard-earned break, not breaking, but enduring the tedium of a wardrobe fitting. But the goofball in her finds ways to keep it from ways to keep it from the standard of the

At one point, draped in a silky black-and-white tunic ("Yo, this is dope"), Latifah tests the garment's comfort level by rapping soundlessly in front of the mirror, head cocked, fist pumping, legs splayed, thrusting hard at her own reflection, as an older woman with some sort of European accent and a pin cushion on her wrist hovers nearby. Of the roomy trousers underneath, Latifah says, "I know I don't have no booty, now you wanna show the world?" Next, in a perfect charcoal suit, she hunches her shoulders, making the jacket gape, giving her the look of a sunken-chested old man. "Oh yeah," Latifah says to the mirror, "we got it goin' on." She's all adolescent energy, like a problem child buzzing on one Twinkie too many, until she puts on an earth-toned geometric-patterned vest without a shirt underneath. Suddenly, she's statuesque, holding the vest in the back and pulling it right across her prodigious bust. admiring the femininity of it out of the corner of her eye. To say that Queen Latifah is part tomboy and part woman, at this moment in time-if not utterly in transition from one to the other-seems fairly incontestable: Between outfits, she strips down to a sexy black bra and mannish boxer shorts.

Trying on and casting off various versions of oneself, juggling identities—it's a very Latifah thing to do. Of course, her best-known identity has been that of rap star, ever since her celebrated debut album, 1989's All Hail the Queen. For here, at last, was the rarest of performers-a rapper you could love: a smart and proud female whose nimble, witty delivery and lyrical common sense marked a major departure from the familiar blood-, sweat-, and testosterone-soaked nihilism of her male gangsta brethren. At a robust 5'9", with high, wide cheekbones and a knowing smile. Latifah accessorized her already commanding demeanor with Afro-regal garb and headgear, setting herself worlds apart from the traditional women of rap-bustier-clad skeezers grinding behind the men. Variously dubbed "The Aretha Franklin of Rap" and "The Queen of Hip Hop," she became an unwitting spokesperson for women, for black folks, for rappers, for the First Amendment-showing up in Gap ads, sitcoms, and movies, winning awards. That is, when she wasn't playing entrepreneur; soon she'd own a video store and a management company called Flavor Unit (whose stable includes Naughty by Nature, Apache, Fu-Schnickens, and D-Nice, and is presided over by her partner, Sha-Kim), and co-run a fledgling label, Flavor Unit Records, which is promoted and distributed through Epic Records.

Clearly, the girl doesn't want to miss anything, But in the peripateir (Queen Latifa), manic overachievement has sometimes resembled another compubsion entirely—to be all things or all people. At levington High's blood, Latifah—ne't Dana Owens was the universal fired, the liston between the nextle, while rying to break up as fight in school. She was maker, who once got her hand birten by a wornas while rying to break up as fight in school. She was in plays and on the baskerball ream, "most popular, most comical, best dinner," Latifah says, clerrly proud of the versatility that 's nonetheless introduced a mass of contactification to the limit of the properties of the contraction of the c dle-class good kid, and Latifah, the cocky star; between the sensitive artist and the savvy manager; between the daughter who won't curse or smoke in front of her mother and the rapper who says she's usually strapped, "nice with a gun," and a gangsta bitch when she has to be; between the pro-woman lyricist and the handler of quasi-misogynist acts who is, needless to say, very down with OPP. (Latifah defends anyone's right to say what they've got to say-besides, this is a business, bottom line.) A fiercely independent recording artist who refuses to capitulate to the demands of the suits. Latifah also wants badly to be bio. So much so that she's submitting to pop culture's most potentially homogenizing, suit-heavy outletthe network sitcom. "I'm out here to make this show a hit, straight up," she says flatly.

Vinuge Latifish, although such declarations are sarring to sound inteller orec. Lately, the earth hide the fact that she's weary of the expectations heaped not her—especially to be a role model, a spokesperson, to don'the queen's clothes and crown. These days, a subject of the certwish legangon of Afro-fermal-Ammanitarian values wears what she likes—be it Naughty gear or grown-up, griftee until—and says the only real obliging organism, and and the same of the company of the company

Which is to say the desire to be all things to all people may be losing its allure. The fact is, she's learned the hard way that the adulation of strangers can't compare to the lowe of a best friend, which Latifah loss over a year ago when her only sibling, her brother Winky, was killed in a motorcycle accident. String on the curb in LA. Outside her dentiat: A outside her dentiat: A office the's allow per ear algo offien the altiforn, Latifish office the's altificing her and no makeup, chairmonking Newporrs, She's almost unerognizable as her alter ego, the' imperious, high-gloss star. "He was indiging with the whole crew." Latifish says of her brother, er, as the startes off into the middle distance. But he alter good coughest are high, sho was shalling as to carch time. The strings to make a turn. A car turned at the same time. He slid up onto the car and that was that. He lost consciousness. When we got to the hospital they side her new weeker." Ne places "It's fucked up."

"I cried af first, and that wasi, really," Latifish pay, "I was constuned, And I was really worded that I neterals was mother cry, I worried she was internalizing everyting. We looked like the fuching Remedys, you know what I'm asyin? You too fucking stunned, you know what I'm asyin? You too fucking stunned, you buggin?" Surely compounding their grief were the autograph shounds who crashed the funeral—a phenomeno Latifish will never understand. The only autographs she ever sought as a kid were from models in manual Ali furth when he came no Newark or the excession of a street being named for him. But she waved, and he waved back—"made my day."

Today, however, talk of the accident easily fills Latifah's eyes with tears. After a minute, she has to laugh. "My brother would be crackin' on me now, 'cus I always used to cry so eas-

I'M TRYING

**PERSON WHO** 

**WAS INSIDE** 

**BEFORE MY** 

PASSED AWAY.

BROTHER

OF ME

TO BE THE

ily." Her mother says that when Dana was little, "all you'd have to say is, 'Dana, you're not moving from this table until you eat your liver,' and suddenly there would be this big red nose and tear balls starting to drip. She'd be just crushed, and her brother would die laubeine."

As kick, she and Winky had a lot of fun together, playing in the park on weekends, getting taken out for Chinese food and karate movies on Thursdays, once smearing up their mother's brand-new yellow-and-white bathroom with their father's black shoe polish for fun. Winky grew up to be a cop in East Orange, ripping off Larifah on which cops were trouble,

which ones were being investigated by Internal Affairs, she in turn would rell her around-the-way boys (NBN's Treach et al.) whom to avoid. Latifah describes her brotheras "cool, a comedian, a straightup loker. He was dope. I was kind of tomboyish, as you can probably tell, so we rode together, us and a whole posso of guys and girls from the Newark area." Now, she wears Winky's bike key on a gold chain around her neck.

She wipes hereyes. 'You just don't expect anything to happen to your family, 'Latthiassay. 'Poople come and go, necords come and go, but your family is the thing that's supposed to be there always. So it sut the worst thing that could happen. Sometimes I'm doay, most of the time! I'm functioning, but I walk around with this every day. And I keep going regardless, 'cut I don't have no choice. My religion tells me

that to commit suicide is a mortal sin, basically, so that was never even a consideration." She ponders for a minute. "It's hard to believe in God when you feet, like, so disrespected, but you have to. If I don't, I'll become a very hostile person. Death gives you a real tick-it attritude: fuk! ti, fuk! you, fuck everybody."

As time passed, the tragedy receded, but, because of the strength and confidence Queen Latisfia esuade, of the strength and confidence Queen Latisfia heades, most people didn't realize; just how destroyed Dana Owens was: "She want't well emotionally, physically, or spiritually," says her close friend Kika Martin, formerly a Safani Sixer, Latisfia's no entime dancers: "You could see it in her appearance, in her face. We'd driver, talk a los about death and Winky, and in the middle of the night, she'd just break down and cry. This harperend a lost."

Into happened a loc. Now, a little more than a year later, amid the considerable distractions of her hydra-like career, she's attemphing to get back to normal. "I'm trying to find myself again," she says. "I'm trying to find the person that was inside of me before my brother passed away, and de that person again." She takes a long pull on a Newport and exhales through a smile. "Actually, one thing I did gain from this was a nice little mean streak that I needed to have. 'Usel was exting too nice.'

The "mean streak" is basically a lowered resistance to bullshit—life, it hardly need be said, is too precious. Where there once seemed to be only cheeky optimism.

> there is now more than a hint of cynicism, due in part to the fact that she was recently dropped from Tommy Boy, the record label that had been home since the beginning.

wearing a white V-neck sweater and shorts, her hair pulled back in a blunt ponytail, Queen Larifah looks less like a rapper codu, than perhaps a lady golfer. She's string on the verands of her string on the verands of the bleached, ally rooms with sulgesish criting of the verand of her bleached, ally rooms with sulgesish criting fans, potted palms, and polished marble—seems to suit her. She is talking about "the beginning." how it all the beginning." how it all the properties of the properties

Rage host Fab 5 Freddy gave her Princes of the Possdemo to Tommy Bop Records, which quickly signed her. It was real simple, Lattish says. "I wasne tike out here struggling, trying to get a record deal. I was in school trying to graduate"—that, and being the human benton in her high school rag proup, Ladies Fab. Leversey fire to the structure of the princes of her Fab. Leversey from Lattis (1) and the princes of her Fab. Leversey from Lattis (2) and the princes of her fab. Leversey from Lattis (2) and the lattis (2) and and deliver. All Hail the Quon by the times she was just

A couple of years later, working on her second allows, she was already chaffing at the limitations of rap stardom, ruing the prospect of being pieconholed. A virtuoso combo platter of reggae, R&B, new jack, popelements, and singing, Nature of a Sitial was ahead of its time as well as her newly minted hip hop fan base. Vering widthy from assertive nat racks like

"Latish's Hall EUp 2 Here" to the hyper-erotic Machanes-tepu come- on" of "How Do 1 Love Thee," many people fit the record lacked the cohesion of her debut. In part because the wanted every track to be surprising, it also lacked the input of AH Hall signature producer, D) Mark the 15 King. The album sold a disappointing \$40,000, partly because Tommy sold a disappointing \$40,000, partly because Tommy probably you'd have franches come and the store of the probably would have franches to the store of the probably you'd have franches to the store of the probably would have franches on the store of th

Another two years later, by the time Latifah started thinking about her third album, Winkly shad died. So, it wasn't a big surprise to see her wandering even further from All Half's optimistic, street focus once she hit the studio. A multicult compilation full of mody reflection—including a hanting track about if it in the hood with a ready hook sung by Latifah top refrection; a juzz composition she produced, in memory of her brother; an aggressive rap song entitled "U.N.I.T.Y. (Who Galling a Birki)"—the aboun is the darkest, most ambitious, and least classifiable main reasons the label droporal be main reasons the label droporal be

"I don't really want to ralk about them," Latifah says, throwing his of chicken from her plate to a sicky white stray car, whom lately she's been looking 
after. "I have other acts on that label [chief among 
them Naughty by Nature], so is not like I'm gonna 
just go dog 'em. They got their opinion, I've got mine. 
No battles, no fights, no guns in your face."

Of course, Queen Larifah would not remain ophaned for long.—Motown happily naspeed her up and released the album Ruck Riege in November. Motown CEOJ [her] Bushy, who some interested in shelf-life than in short-term sales (and can afford to be, at Motown, in a way that Tommy Boy cannot), praises Larifah's wide-maging talent and admires her new musit's risk pit retrospection, adding. This is release you can put the Motown stamp on and fiel very cortaid of It will be a Motown catalone select.

Nonetheless, the split with Tommy Boy still frame. He had been seen ally disappointed initially," says Laifsh's placid, protective mother, Rita Owen, a high school at reacher who is also the ard director of Flawor Unit, which has its headquarters in Jersey (Ciry. "Fits not like they were saying, Wen Ionger want you, but they seemed to indicate that maybe thought for the wint the changes that he was going through?—this after an enthusiated listening party and you may may concern as with hew Dama yeardy on." My major concern was with hew Dama inally it makes you question yound! but I think she came though it with fiving colors.

mphasizing her enduring fondness for Latifah, whom she's known since the artist was 17. Tommy By president Monical knock learly dosed it want to talk about the split, and will only say she released her from the label because "we maybe have a different vision." Declining to get specific, she adds, "Iknow this is rare, releasing an artist who's got the star quality that Latifah has. But we think it's the





right thing to do. It feels like the right karma."

It's been suggested by people close to the situation that Latifish's unwillingness to listen to feedback and criticism about the album created subtle tensions between her and Tommy Boy. Latifish herself Says between her and Tommy Boy. Latifish herself Says It's was kind of like, forget it, I'm ado my thing. This album's got a lot of hear in it, it's real personal confliction. It was a way for me to get out some of the stuff that was on my mind, on my hear."

I WANT TO

DO AN ACTION-

ME AND WHOOP!

ADVENTURE.

SHOULD DO

A MOVIE.

was on my mind, on my neart.

She is unapologetic about the less-than-predictable directions her instincts take her. "I have different sides of myself, different styles," as says, a little indignant. 'If I feel like flippin' on some reggae shit, I ma flipit. Czu I cand ot hat. If wann fall' pis some hardcore shit, I wan flipit. If it's gonna be some laid-back folk shit then I can do that, too.

Asifwedidn't know. Queen Latifah's almost as well known these days for her screen work as for her music. She's demonstrated innate skill and charisma to spare in small roles in Juñes and House Party 2, as well as in Spike Lee's Jungle Fewr, in which she plays a Harlem waitress whose

Afrocentric glare all but burns holes in Wesley Snipes and his white date. This month, she plays a hospice nurse in My Life, starring Michael Keaton, a part she landed after the casting director sported her and her morher on the talk show Women Aloud on Comedy Central, "We weren't particularly going for a famous name," the movie's producer, Jerry Zucker, says of the decision to cast Latifah. But, despite a relative lack of experience, she was "completely unguarded and natural," he says, in addition to the fact that she photographs beautifully. For her part, Latifah says, she liked working with Keaton, although the role itself wasn't a big challenge. "I don't really want to do any more of these little rinky-dink roles. I want to do an action-adventure. Me and Whoopi should do a movie. Or maybe I might just have to write my own movie. I want to do a lot of different things-important things.

Which is hardly a description of what she's up to in Living Single. Following the well-worn formula of Designing Women and The Golden Girls, the show throws rogerher four distinct personalities-a diva, a flake. a smartass, and a big-sister type (Latifah, surprise, surprise)-who parry and spar their way through some corny dilemma that usually revolves around men. Although Latifah is a strong presence on the set-her delivery wonderfully warm and naturalit's odd seeing her put through the paces in rehearsal. The process is unbearably tedious, what with endless interruptions, daily script revisions, and a mess of ADs. PAs, and the director Tony Singletary dragging their podiums and chairs listlessly from scene to scene every half-hour or so. Latifah is visibly enervated by the routine, which bears no resemblance to the spontaneous, idiosyncratic way she makes music. Still, there's a lot of charm in the four-woman ensemble. and the show's doing well in the ratings-perhaps the breezy theme song Latifah wrote and sang helps, as does the fortuitous fact that it follows the Sundaynight homeboy hit Martin.

The show's creator and co-executive producer, Yvette Denise Lee, had originally been approached about a Latifah vehicle by Warner Bros., with whom Latifah had a holding deal (meaning, they paid her not tomake a TV deal elsewhere). In creating the char-

> acter Khadijah, Lee-who says Latifah is sillier and more fun to work with than people might think-says she had to bear in mind the expectations of Latifah's fans. "She had to be forthright, honest, opinionated, and strong," she says, which, of course. Latifah is to a T. Lee describes Larifah's character as "someone who struggles pretty intensely to find a balance between personal life and career, and Dana's doing that with two careers " As for romantic stoty lines, there will be some for Khadijah, says Lee. although "men are not her number-one priority."

> Latifah's ever-protective friends, Kika and right-hand woman Amanda Smith, have

worried that Kadijah would end up the eternal big sister, the way Latifah often does. Latifah herself talks often about her much-overlooked femininity and her "delicate, sensitive" side, denoted by her Arabic stage name; she says she'd like to marry one day and have some kids. "I've been wanting to have a baby since I was 17, "Latifah says, "I wanted to do it early like my mother did, so that I could be cool and just have fun and be young enough to swing with the kids and have the energy for 'em like my moms and my pops did for us. Just recently I made the decision that I wanted a husband, because I know I'm not gonna be able to swing that pregnancy alone: Soon as I get morning sickness I'm gonna become a bitch and somebody's gotta share it with me. And I want them to grow up with a father, I didn't." Like Latifah's brother, her father was a cop; her parents divorced when she was 10.

She doesn't hold a grudge, however. "My pops is dope," she says. "He wain't there physically or financially like he should have been, but he was bartling his own demonts." she pauses. "And my moms is like the dope mom. I wish they could 've stayed together 'cuz they would 've made the fly couple. I warna grow old with somebody. She says." I think that would be nice."

It's difficult to picture Larifah with any guy, but she's fairty specific about her type, "Fernonally I'd like a real dark guy, with beautiful, smooth, shiny chocolate skin, with a nice body, "she says." I need a big guy' cut I'm a big girl and they gost to be also to swang me around and this, carry me acound de house. I'we been with all kinds of guys—never a whize guy, toogh." Would she ever'! Jodober I: might hang out with 'em, but I don't think I would steep with me. I just feel like here's so many besutful black. The properties of the state of the state of the state of the white guys that have been so cool and so down that it made not think about it he were less in we write." on that macho shit that a lot of the brothers tend to be on, that ego-tripping shit that winds up getting half of our brothers killed."

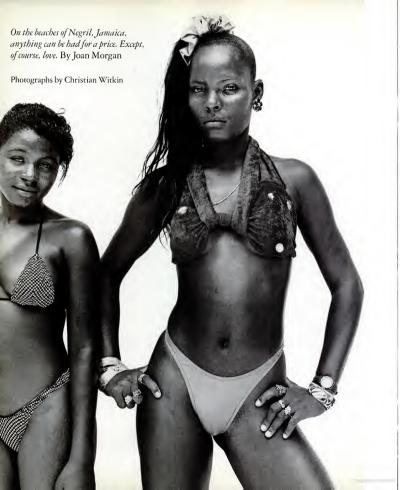
Il take the music business over the TV business any days, "Queen Latish asys, after another long day at Fox, as the eternally worried Amanda Smith chases after het, rtyling to goose her along to a publicity photo shoot. So it's no surprise to soe her relaxed and happy when Startud'ay comes. In the back of a limo reading the L.A. gangland saga Menner, instening to a tape of her songs, and running upen under her breach, she's en route to Los Angeles International Airport. There she'll class the fight to Monnara View in Non-There she'll class the fight to Monnara View in Nontries—utraining from TV star into a rapper, to perform in the "SMEL Summer lam."

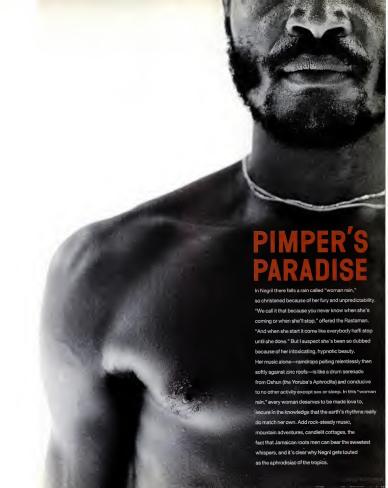
Handly showcased as one of the day's bigger draws, Lardifin falls somewhere in the middle of a long roster, before Mary J. Blige, Chrys, SWV, Run-D. M.C., Lee Cube, and after H-Town, Levert, Digabet Plantes, and Toni Braxton. Taking strong strides across the stage in finiged white shorts and a sleedwest leasther jacker, with a backwards Raiders cap where crowns used to sixt, the has sond where the store some sort of props from the audience: "I want to thank you for letting me come here and... Lind.!" a used it to thank you for... "It is not day and the deauthory crowd is in no for..." It is not day and the deauthory crowd is in or..." It is not day and the deauthory crowd is in or... "It is not day and the deauthory crowd is in a lack luster performance and Latifish faults herelfrays" if the words to use. more than once.

Who could blame her? With the number of protests he's got going, o, some things will have to suffer. Richard Griffiths, the executive VP at Epic and Havor Unit point man, has expressed mild worry about all that's distracting her and Sha-Kim. "To be honest, there have been times when they've been busy with other things, although it reall ly share it mantered yet," he sur, but even thin'y speed api impressivo Bussell Simmons thinks Latifal's going to have to pull back some. "She's so personable, he has such a presence, and that's something you can't buy or could be a surface." She's so personable can't focus on all that he does at one time. It's hard rod igent it all' perhanse vene for he of the surface of the surface of the surface all that he does at one time. It's hard rod igent it all' perhanse vene for he

Of course, music was never the real reason folks of all types have taken such an interest in Laiffah. It's more an ineffable magnetism that's brought her the sort of mass-media attention talented young black women rarely get. Now, the woman of potentially countless identities has to figure out who she'll be next, and who, at the end of the day, the really snaywy. On the one hand, Laiffah wasta sorbing more than to be large, on the other, having experienced the reall evantaceme of life, the ears only two doher own reall evantaceme of life, the ears only two doher own always by Danno Owens deep down—a bije-barrel elevent of the countless of the

"I'm not gonna say what's gonna happen," she says, in a way that leaves little room for discussion." The gonna change, and I'm gonna grow. People always kind of want you to strick to the same mold." Latifah pusses just long enough to stretch her famous half-smirk, half-smile. "But me, personally, I don't plan on going out like that." U





But the rains sometimes bring false promises; Negril is a town forced to specialize in illusions. Ten years ago this seven-mile stretch of prime beachfrout property was an uninhabited oasis. Since then Jamaica's tourist industry, the life blood of the legal economy, staked its claim by investing millious of dollars to turn the once peaceful retreat into a bustling vacationers' have peaceful retreat into a bustling vacationers' have

Strange things happen when a community is converted into a cash crop. Hotels, restaurants, and entertainment businesses operate side by side with fungdealing, prostitution, and other black-market trades. While rendless entertainment is provided for vacationers, the locals are expected to "make air pudding out of wind sauce." Extremely expensive by the average yardie's standards, Negril's bisunssess soften don't

offer the customary "local price" for concerts and such. The nearest movie in the marest school is to 18 miles away and the nearest school is maybe five miles away and the nearest school is maybe five miles away. So the young propie here run the beach every day doing what they've seen their claders doing; hussting, Everything in Negrili—from friendship and sex to religion and but is ripe for the marketplace. Hence the parting words of the Rastnam: "Ber full, African lady. Negril is a town of man whope and woman whore,"

the return of the sun restores the tonist activities. The beach is lined with volleyball games and Frisber players. Europeans who know litcle to no English sing bob Marley songs to the best of their heavily accented abilities. Local vendors hawk their wares—peanuts, water coconuts, gania cake. Dreadlocked, chocolart-dipped natives trub suntan lotion on the bodies of topless white women with freshly braided corntows.

I want to take my shir off. So does Ann's, 22-year-old Jamacian-centration-innent coordinator for a beachfron hord. She and I make our way to the surf, eager to reach the deep so we can remove our to the compact of the contract of the con

extremely poor taste to kiss in public. As we approach the shoreline a statuesque beauty, with brownness and booty to die for, struts her stuff past us. We stop just long enough to give Miss Ting an appreciative once-over. Props due, I concede: "The sista's got it goin' on, Ann." Much to my surprise. Miss Ting responds with a look of anger that betrays a bit of hurt. Ann senses my confusion. "Be careful with the whores," she says matter-of-factly, "She probably thought you were saying something bad about her. And some of them can get quite nasry if they think you're trying to snub them." Once in the water I turn again to look at Miss Ting, who's now serving much jungle fever further down the beach, and wonder what about her French-cut onepiece could have tipped off Ann. The fuschia thong resting on two perfect orbs was the answer to my question: In Negril, a black woman this uninhibited could only be a prostitute.

NIBHT MUSE. The men come our at night. Some sare pure but "J Gamacian for till-bred and country as beld), like the one harrassing Ann and me for hanging out art an outdoor Gregory Issues concert with two German visitons from her hort: "Look at the beautiful African woman dem taske up with as white man," he says. "Oncy unkneed dem educated, dem nah wit fig wite well buck brothers a channe at all. Pure the winning of the property of the best for the channel and the best for the channel at all. Pure the channel are sufficiently for the best for the channel and the best for the channel as the best for the channel and the channel and the best for the channel and the chann

"Night nurse, only you alone can quench this va



'The rent-a-dreads know what they can get out of a white woman is more than they can get out of black woman.'

thist/Ohmynight nurse, the pain is getting wone; croms the Cod Rude during his headile appearance. Here comes buru boy number two, blindsdifing me from the left: "Aysever gal—who have file great Jamaican bwoyfriend before yul go back?" Beford 1 Jamaican bwoyfriend before yul go back?" Beford 1 can answer, a prelie blond infolhers and Bacther flasheshim a rather dirty look. He says to me, in a spliffed, out, drunken stuper, "Rauti," mit et the white blich get away. "Recognizing his flux pas, he catches himmore dat, yuls know." Then off Money dashes in search of blondie."

"So now you know the pecking order," Ann says, laughing. "These dreadlocks check the white women first, then the very light-skinned, and then the brown ones like us last. I've never seen a dreadlock in Negril with a very dark-skinned black woman. And don't

think it's because they don't love dem black woman. But they know what they can get out of a white woman is more than they can get out of a black woman, even a black American."

Notall of them are butu. Some can even kick it in a number of different European languages. A few admit to being Flowatts, 'yardis who readily engage in the sweet taboo foral sex. Many are mad fine, very inviting, and noticeably unemployed. Their social skills and crisp geat, which look like presents from white griffitends, are the telltale signs of Negril giolos—what Jamaions call "rent-derads."

"Use caution when entering any new relationship," advises the Negril Neurweely in an August 6 cover story, "The Lure of the Jamaican Men." "Especially." it continues, "when there are so many un-

known factors. To hurry in, particularly when you are being given the rush, may prove to be a foolish, even heart-breaking decision on your part.... Women have reported being robbed, beaten or entrapped in an intimate relationship they wished to get out of, but were afraid to do so." The article goes on to offer the following survival tips: "Keeping control of your own money is always recommended when entering into a relationship, Obviously there are many Jamaicans who are not in a good financial position. and you may choose to provide for some of or all the expenses of being together. But...it is common knowledge that there are many 'rent-a-dreads' (or wolves in sheep's clothing) who go from one foreign woman to the next. This rype of person is considered by most Jamaicans to be little more than a male prostitute."

When playing for lowe the stakes are high. Generally speaking, the harder the woman falls, the higher the take. Giffs range from the woman picking up the tab for all their dates to jeweltry, cars, houses, travel shrond, marriages, and ultimately the covered green eard. How different these men are from their female ferent these men are from their female ferent these men are from their female creates the state of the state of the state in her barty rider and low-cut tep. Her excessive makeup is an attempt to mask the hash facial lines that occur when the body remains deteached from the spirit.

The men, however, have no need for such masks.
Their sisters work hard turning tricks for a paltry
\$100JA(US\$4); while the men sell the lucrative illusion of low.

"Rastaman want you to know," yells the Dija the local of the Gregory Jasacs ser, 'lisp upal the white women, Rastaman love you. Big up Boh Marley, because it's Boh Marley bring up all the white people dem to Negril...' Both dreadlocks and touriss alike respond with an enthusiastic' Jah Rastafari! There is, of course, some truth to this. Brother Bob's mounternal success and the commercialization of Rastafari have attracted waterioners from around Rastafari have attracted waterioners from around Tashir waters thou know that Rastafari is the faith of the downpressed, that a Rasta is more than a longbatted gaing smooth.

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FOREIGN MIND. LOCAL BODY: Exactly who's primping of whom's primping whost primping

indication as with evaluational participation and indication as with evaluation and indication men, or helier intimutate understanding of the soul. "There is a certain poetry to the way they talk," he says. "The most unclucated gay can sir down and talk about his philosophy. Like this little one who took me across the bridge to look at these reflections in the water. I thought they were lillies. It turnsou to they were bridge with the silies in the water of the hadn't walked me by that spot under the mooflight and oplained it rom them and the way they connect to you. It's like they've known you all your life."

Allison's attraction comes partly from the fact that Jamaican men don't share the Innecentric procurpation with the "perfect hody." She finds it refreshing for "some white woman who feels that, by American standards, she isn't Vogur material. There's a side of Jamaican men that just sees women as women. Fat women, thin women—they te women. When I'm in Jamaica no one judges me as overweight, or thinks that my as is flabby in my thong."

She tells me the story of het sister, a successful businesswoman from Washington, D.C., who recently fell in love in Negril. "My sister used to say to me, Don't you think you should get help, talk to somebody, and find out why you have to be with a black man?' She would ask me like there was something wrong with me. After meeting het man {an aspiring DJ] she called me from Jamaica and said, 'Al, all I can say is you are so right and I was so wrong. I don't know if I can ever be with a white man again." Her sister wenr home, broke up wirh her fiancé, and is now conremplating marrying her Jamaican man and having his baby. "I know many women that go down there and are like, 'Once you taste it, that's the flavot," says Allison. "Friends ask me if I think I'll ever go out with a white guy. And I'm like, I hope not."

Alrhough Toni has newer endured a relationship with a rent-a-fead, she admiss that even friendships between Jamaican men and whire women can be somewhat predatory in nature. 1 do feet that which the love and all the charm that there can be a certain in taking with the men. Their expectation is that, white woman comes down, she comes down to provide and be serviced."

Sitting with them I remember Ann's rage, her feeling that many of these women are victims of their own racism. These ladies come down from America, or Europe, or wherever they it from to get the sex in Negari, she said. They go for the darkest guys, especially if they think they ir Rastas, and they are willing to pay anything. They II say things tome like, I've black guy would feel like in bed. I've black guy would feel like in bed. I've per as dare ut if they're good. They feel as if they're doing us a favor by wanting to sleep with us. I've Is not like all these by wanting to sleep with us. I've Is not like all these





guys go out of their way to date white women. The white girls approach them. And when they get reatted like shit it's like, 'Oh my God, he's such a dog and I didn't know it was the Jamaican way. They set themselves up to be treated that way. Because a guy is not going to respect you when you approach him and ask him for sex."

But Allison has been both keeper and happy, "then lakar my man I was very happy," she says. "He was warm, loving, intelligent, the dight really have any money, He dight really were good enoughforme. This is a brother ways that were good enoughforme. This is a brother ways that but I remember coming back to New York thinks, but I remember coming back to New York thinks, in ghat it was mally nice to know he was down there may have been an active that the ways the ways the same and the ways th

The comment reminded me of a beach scene I'd witnessed between a Rastawoman, a dread, an Italian woman, and their biracial toddler. The dread and his Rastawoman discussed family matters while their three small children played quietly. The Italian woman cried hysterically, repeatedly screaming, "Why? How could you do this to me?" Unable to ignore her, he grabbed her arm and said, "Yuh no hear me say go way! Me cyan't talk to vuh now!" The Italian woman stood in shock, recovering long enough to pick up her child who had ventured over to his darker siblings. The Rastawoman never batted an eve.

RASTMAN LIVE UP. Rastas do nor eat pounasy or pork and they are not incredibly fond off-pink people. This, in a nutabell, is shyl Tommy, a clinnamon-direct Rasta with havel eyes and brown haby dreads, hastes Negril. He lives instead on a hill behind Treasure Beach, about an hour and a half drive away. Negril, he thinks, is Babylon. "How can find six real Rastaman in Negril, our leuker. Park beauting dreads the share and the statement of the statement and the statement peaceful man. I shared the scripture and keep shin it and the scripture and keep shin it and the scripture and keep shin it and them. How the Rastman coul-

da ewh mix up in all o' dat drugs and see business. Twenty-on-eyer-of dl Tommy has been a Rasta for almost two years. Like many Rastas, he's aban-doned Kingston for a simpler, more spiritual life. Affer a while on this empty beach and hillidide, it's painfully evident that his faith is all he has in this world. 'My mother died in January and I never knew my father, he says.' It was the teaching of the scriptures and Jah love for I-and-I that stopped me from getting side in the head.'

He's not quite sure what to make of the mane of blondish-brown dreadlocks that my traveling partner for the day, Dana, wears like a crown. Her light skin and hazel eyes, clues to her binaciality, make him skeptical. "Why you lock your hair?" he asks.

"Because Rasta is near to my heart," she answers as patiently as possible. "You're half white, right? Probably German." Her affirmative answer launches him into a spiel about his dislike for Germans, their atheism, and Europeans in general. Eventually he gives her the okay, but not before reminding her that Europe is the dark side of the world; Jah Rastafari and all things African are the lisht side.

"So you don't do the white-girl thing," I sak.
"Rastrama should have a black woman by his
side," he says definitively. "His seed should be born
from a black woman." Then, staring out at the occun,
he wavers. "A white girl had my baby and it turned
out very bad." Six months ago the English babymother stopped returning his calls and letters, But
hestill writes her twice a month." I just want my twoand-half-month-old haby to know who his father is."



'There's a certain poetry to the way

Jamaican men talk. Even the most uneducated guy
can sit down and talk about his philosophy.'

NO WOMAN, NO CRY: It's raining again in Negril. Those of us who are not sleeping or having sex move about in a somnambulistic daze, not quite sure what to do with ourselves. Ann and I walk through the pouring rain to go hang out at Ronnie's, where the vibe is always roots and righteous. Even the busiest hustlers drop their scams out of respect. The proprietor, Mas Ron (his real name), is one of the few black Jamaicans who own beachfront property. Francesca, a German expatriate, comes in with her 12-year-old daughter. Her sad eyes foreshadow the story she's about to tell. She's upset because the Jamaican man she lives with has started to wear his wedding ring from his marriage to another woman, "Not that it matters to me, his marriage, I understand a young Jamaican guy needing a green card to better himself. But why must he wear the ring?"

Ann noticeably restrains herself: "He wears his

ring, Francesca, because be's married."

When she leaves the table explodes. Pure dibposition by a black bowy she run wir, "shoutsonbey-dibby fool black bowy she run wir, "shoutsoned dread. "Only dem de kind woulda take up wir dispussyhole white gal." Another tells Ann he understands why she's single. "White gal punany make these guys lose themselves. They wouldn't show how to tell a good woman, Wouldn't even know how to treat one."

I've seen the sadness in Francesca's eyes before, in the eyes of another German woman. I remember Goldy, a breathtaking dreadie, holding court at a beachside table with me and two other black women from New York. At his feet, a German woman sat in silence. "Mi usually can't take dem black Americans, even the Jamiscian ones that grow up abroad," he said.

"But you girls are conscious roots girls. You don't look down on us. The black Americans they come here and call us 'rent-a-dreads,' But they don't understand this country. You could work bard here for your entire life and never be able to buy a house with running water. Can't buy a car. Sometimes can't even feed your kids. The white people come here and some of them buy us houses, not luxuries, but things that can change your life." We talked for hours about the politics of this, about Malcolm and Garvey, Harlem and Kingston, and the worldwide suffering of black people. The German woman continued to sit in silence, waiting to be acknowledged. Finally, he introduced us, neglecting to tell us her name. "My sisters," he concluded, "forever one blood,"

Suddenly her silence annoyed him. Turning to her, seemingly for the first time, he said, "What? What? What yuh have to say?"

"You know them for so little time and you call them your sisters," she ventured timidly. "I feel I can never be your sister because I am whire."

"Yes, you are white," he replied. "And you can never, never he my sister. They are my sisters because we are one blood."

In an attempt to cut through the tension, we ask him to introduce her. He cannot for the life of him remember her name.

The trans in her was confirm what we'd been traine.

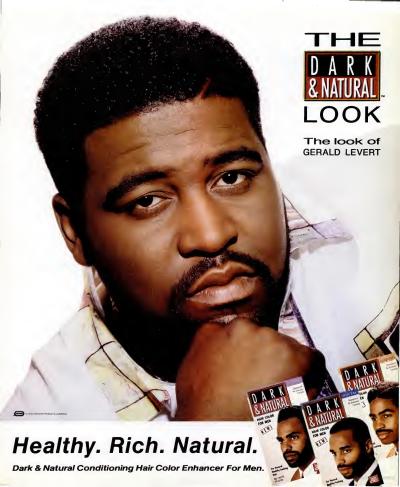
to ignore—that this is someone he'd been sexing.
"Go and put your daughter to bed," he orders in a
voice not meant to be challenged. "I'll see you when
we go to country tomorrow."

"Whatever happened to Goldy?" I ask the other dreads at the table.

Turns out he doesn't come around much anymore.
"He has a house and a car now," one answered. "The
guy is one of the biggest gigolos around."
"Why do they do it?" Ann asks, looking out at the

"Why do they do it?" Ann asks, looking out at the falling rain.

"So Negril stay," the waiter answers, slightly exasperated. "With all the beauty, you find that very few peopleare in rouch with their spirit. The women come here looking for something you can't buy. The men sell what should not be bought. Negril is a place of the lonely and the lost." "I





by Greg Tate

ake a baddhead brooding black girl from DC, and turn her loose on a Feedre bass. Left er learn what the find's about while kicking bottom on Chocolate City's do-or-die go-goscene. Transplant the sists as Godham with as not no raid a demotocall her own. Watch her sign to Madonna's Maerick Label C. Inaque her Anglicinn ame to Obleg GCCello, Swahili for 'free like a bird,' 'case you sin't hip. Title the debut album Plantanian Lalklade.

In the immortal words of Eddie Kendricks, what you say to that What are yousy affect listening on the Shell MageQoil.

Plantanius on the Shell MageQoil.

Plantanius Lallabies, but they, yo, this is the future of the funk.

Funk like it was back in the day, "Dalck and conscious" in Mc Shell's memory. A loving cop flowing over with clavineteur candy, 10-in-ch bas lines and Wah May Maxong guita rash.

Not 10 mention to opical lyrics: Her songs funk with race, sex, drug, succession that the shell delivery of the black may be drug, surveyuries dust, and the reagedy of the black may be.

You want to talk about the Next Wave in Soul Music, you to go to talk about thic manua Me Shall. How dope is sike Ji-le Wond epi sike Ji-le Wond e

The album is sexy and daring: You never head a love song devoted to 'Boxon' Lip and Getr in High' with my bably before, have you? Not cutside of punk rock you haven't. What kind of shit in Me'Shell on 'Some O'l Next Shit. Being a Winge sex sex yo love but hard to pin down. Amsions in the afterglow of Plantaniu Lallahie, Me'Shell deigned to get open on the after plow of the 'Harlem brownstone and in a downtown hangout called Fee while summer "9'y wared.

If you were trying to describe funkiness to a Martian immigrant, what kind of metaphor would you use?

Funk for me is like the pilgrimage to Mecca in Islam. An awakening. A song of praise. Funk releases some demons and spirits inside of me.

When did you realize you had a spiritual connection with the funk? When my manager asked me if I had ever heard of Larry Graham. I said, who, the singer? Then I heard him play bass and he floored me. I play very similarly to him and had never even heard his stuff. That's when I realized that funk is something that I do and feel unconsciously.

Do you look forward to playing in front of a hometown audience, the old go-go clubs you used to play?

Nope, not at all. I'm very nervous about playing at home. I didn't fit too well in D.C. Playing in the band didn't mean I fit. They used to laugh at the must elidi. They though it is as so out. So, um, laugh now, motherfuckers! That's how I feel. I love D.C. and a lot of this music is spawned from what I learned there playing in the poor bands, but it was not resy.

What's your wildest memory from the go-go days?

Once, when I was with Little Bennie and the Masters, were playing at the Cherry Atlantic Skating Rink. We heard gunfire and the guy they were shooting at must uponstage, So befy 're shooting at us and shit his may bass and we just all Sell out on the floor. And the funniest thing is our rappert, Little Bennie, was still Impering and I'm like, 'Get your ass down'! My man was feeling the power of god. That was some hilarious shir. The thing about the go-go too is, 'Kump Shaker' video sin't got nothing on a go-go. The girls would come up onstage and there would be a lot of sas up there moving.

A lot of people I play your CD for want to know, what is her marhet voins to be?

Yeah, think how I feel. Maybe I'm crazy but I think anybody can listen to it. First of all, my audience is black people, bottom line. Any colored folks will find something they can relate to At Warner Bros., they had to realize I wan't a cookie cutout. Mawrick already knew that, but the marketing people knew that go the marketing people was made and problems with my album cover because it's like some psychodicil part shir. Silke, go cover it. They we some psychodicil part shir. Silke, go cover it. They we saim gir's too abstract. I rold them black people are the creases and founders of abstract. The Ohio Player album covers, those were the shirs. Funkadelic covers. Where did that go? Who decided that was too complex for the black audience to go! to told somebody! made my music because! wanted to caresa people's mids. Give "ero something either tool look at:

I was surprised you came out gay in the Black Rock Caalition newsletter, and in such an affirmative, antihomophobic way. A lot of gay people in the business are intimidated by the response they think they'd get for coming out.

It can be very painful. Especially from my people. Idon't really care what the other side thinks. I did an interview the other day with The Adwarae and that's all they harped on. I was afraid to say I was bisexual because I didn't think I was being a politically correct lesion. The interviewer actually asked, well, how did the child happen? And I was like, in the standard way. I aim't into that turkey-basting thing at all. I do not hate men and being gay does not negate my maternal institucts or want.

There's a lot of identification with the plight of black men on your record, but there's not too much womanist or antisexist sentiment there.

record, and there is not too much usemants or antisexus sentiment toere.

Oh yeah, but I don't think I shause women. I'm in check with
myself with women, how I see them, how I treat them, I'm way
past that. The next album is all about the abuse of people and
god, and women are definitely the main subject matter. Women,
we're definitely in the next album if y'all can wait that long.

The songs on Plantation Lullabies came from a certain petiod in my life, from dealing with my son's father, a bunch of things. I had lytics and music that I wanted to sound a certain way and here it is. In that sense, I hope I can say women do have a voice and a way of speaking that is unique. So I'm trying to create that—how a woman feels straight up, not that John Singleton crap.

You give white girls a pretty hard time on "Soul On Ice." You catch any flak for that? Kinda funny, you doing that song on Madonna's

Ain't it, though? That's their favorite song. I think white people love being put in the spotlight in those kinda things. Makes them feel less guilty when we point them out. That song came from reading Eldridge Cleaver's book and finding it very interesting. Am I racist? I don't know. How do you feel about the song? You don't saree with it?

I don't have a problem with it. It's something I been bearing from black women from day one, starting with wy mother. Like I told you below, though, I thought it was fresemptuous to set pain jut because a brother was with a white woman it meant that he thought black women are unattractive. Or was seduced by this ideal of white womambood. But wother was allowed that.

I am? Okay, thank you. 'Cause I don't dislike anybody. I'm more progressive than that. I have problems with color, I think, because I think my son's father would take care of him if I were lighter-skinned. I've been alienated for being darker...

Me'Shell, you ain't that dark. But I guess you ain't that mulatto ideal so many brothers profer, either. To the point where you be out with a dark sister and sisters come up and say, 'It's so good to see you with a real sister.'

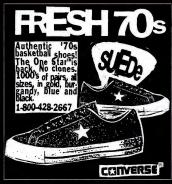
I feel bad too when I think like that 'cause I'm like, damn, I'm doing the same thing I'm accusing others of. But I'm learning to love the many aspects and shades of my sisters. We're all beautiful. 2

Greg Tate is the author of Flyboy in the Buttermilk: Essays on Contemporary America (Fireside).

## Tis the season to do your holiday shopping.



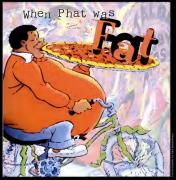
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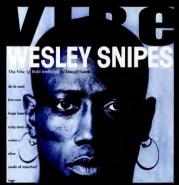
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#### ROOM TO BREATHI

Scott Poulson-Bryant goes back to his roots and follows the Leaders of the New School to Charlle Brown's house.

Long Island, 1973: Some soft kids whose parents moved 'em outta the city. Y'all ain't really down.

Long Island, 1993: The jeans are a little baggier, the bikes a little more naged, but if is the Long Island Ithink Iremember as I drive up to the house in Unional de where Charlie Brown, of Leaders of the New School, grewup and still lives. Outside the brick-Increde home, Busta Rhymes and Dinco are surrounded by a group of local boys wearing Karl Kani, Ireestyling to tracks from the new LONs album, T.M.E. Mrs. Higgins, Charlie Brown's mother, sits near the orange, white, and purple flowers that grow modestly along the walkew, watching a photographer circle the rappers for shots. Kids are playing in the yard across the street, darting in and around a dark-bub Pontiae parked in the driveway. A dog barks somewhere across a fence. And young men emerging from red BMWs say "pardon me" as they gol in and out of the house.

Just another day in hijo hop suburbia. Sometimes there's still the "remember when" of hijo hop's Libban Ohiy days, when the grit and bite of wordy, inner-city kide was bond. Kids from around this way—whose parents probably moved out to the Island to escape the cliy—had to traighe so the Remx and Uprown, to the Fewer and the Lath Quarter, to catch the vibe of the new breed. Now, in the days after Public Enemp. Fire S. A Railem, and De La Soul,

Long Island stands as a hip hop mecca of its own, spouling out talent and flavor to burn. Inside the Higgins home, where Expory magazines line a shelf undermeath a panel of family anapshots, where sports trophies sit atop one whole dining-room wall, where there are homegrown tomatios or the windowsill over the kitchers nisk, Hisgins talks about the role of her house as a homebase for her superstat son, after I call her a hip hop mom. The feeling was I Carther have been here, where I know who's coming

in, what kind of people they're hanging out with. It's better to have an open door." Mrs. Higging srew up on Long Island and never thought about raising her family anywhere else. "It's nice here, whatever you wanted was have. But you had access to the city If you wanted the culture," she says. "City life different. The quieter lifestyle here means you can talk to each other, one on one. The quiete sapect gives you the time to think of what you want to do. If so more peaceful where."

Peaceful, that is, except for the guys playing Street Fighter in on the Nintendo in the family room, and Jake, the big green parch, perched on his own tall branch of free in the dining room. Jake can dence, Mrs. Higgins put the stereou on—appropriately evoudy, Mrs. Si he playing De La Soul—and shows me how Jake has perfected the bopping, headnoding East Gossel Stromp that Leaders work so well. Bisponed across the family-room wall is a huge ad for Doublemint, featuring Charlier Brown's slatent, he first black kivins elauted on a billiboard for the gum campaign. Their bright, healthy smiles reflect that peacefulness Mrs. Higgins talked about, and thet Charlier Brown add sto.

"It's a cool we're from Uniondale' cause the name means something," he says supplies, "We're all constantly united." Hetellare madout meet-ing Dinco and Busta in high school, through football in the park. How where thorehers were both into music, a loost Wildo coming from Ambrysile ("which pot a rep like it's more of a suburban ghetto, it's rougher, but it's cool out there"). Thus, after conversation, he's su pagain, numing to the house, picking the others outside for a freezing, in uniform to the house, picking the others outside for a freezing, but before he gone, the ways to me." Hy parents were fortunate enough to have a house so the way it thick about thing is different from the brothers that are trapped out there. Not a whole lod different, but out here ig port rout to think." I





We are family: Brown's double-dope, Doublemint twin sisters

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## SCREEN JAMS

Who's winning the battle of the late-night bands?

WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN not to believe the late-neight hype. The so-called talls-show wars have become downer ight monotonous. We resick of all the cirtics drolling in anticipation of somebody falling on their Chase—et, fac. We ve read every possible angle on Letterman vs. Leno, heard all there is oknow about Ansenio, and been bornheld with bits about O Bien. Now

Afrerall who cares about the hours? It's the hand we tune in to see And the hoses know ir. too. Conan has raken to opening his show with an acoustic guirar around his neck and he still gets laughe when he asks his audience "Are you ready to rock?!!" Arsenio tells his band to play something "nagasty" and then shuffles around the stage like a buffoon. Chevy keeps showing us that he's a pianist (for those of you reading aloud, that's one who plays the piano). And Dave, who figured this stuff our long ago, has been using the band to spice up his skits and monologues from day one. No wonder he's on top.

One positive result of all the competition is that musical guests are getting a little better. Late-night TV is trying to break our of the white-bread mold of old. Today's bandleader must feel equally at home with Engelbert Humperdinch or Fu-Schnickens, and serve as sidekick and song stylist, sortalike Ed McMahon and Doc Severinsen rolled into one. Here's the Vile breakdown from the ton.

SHAFFER/LETTERMAN NBC owns the rights to 'The World's Most Dangerous Band,' which Paul Shaffer led for 11 years, and which was, in the leaner years of Late Nigbt, the best reason to tune in. Now appearing as Paul Shaffer and the CBS Orchestra, it's still the best TV band on the air. The addition of furth.

master Bernie Worrell on keys and dreadheaded Felicia Collins on guitar adds welcome new flavors, colors, and hairstyles (though Worrell still hasn't been given room to flex his skills). Even in the sprawling Ed Sullivan Theater, that fragile chemistry between the goofs, gap-toothed host and his perperually stoned-looking bandleader is still in full effect. No one ad-libs a musical pun better than 'the Shin.' He learned his comic skills as former pinnist for the Blues Brothers and as Bill Murray's "Lounge Singer" accompanist. Oxastardar Nivila Lise. But since releasfrom his bebop, yet he's not afraid to launch into a tongue-in-check Led Zep ower. Breaking through boundaries of color and skepticism now looks easy compared with the task of serving as "nice guy" sidekick to Leno, whose most memorable work is truming out to be those old Doritos spors. At least Marsalis understands his place as a lare-night particularly. We're all in the same how."

Sour note: Chave better keen all his coreer outloos once.

ing his own album (World's Most Dangerous Party), Paul should beware of breaking the sidekick's Golden Rule—never hog the limelight.

MARSALIS/LENO Branford's the man. He's funny, he's schened, he's got a Grammy, and, most important—people really like him. He and his crack sern-piece band faced a difficult task early last year in waking the skepy-eyed audience that was expecting another coofhall à Doc. He knows his his ho

he says, "right behind Bobo the Clown on the talk-show food chain, and right above most lower chordates." (Careful of that Golden Rule, Branford...)

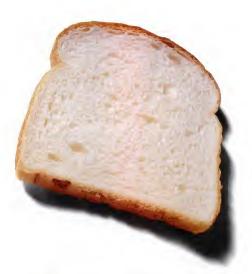
WOLFF/MALL Given the givens, Michael Wolff hasn't done a bad job. When you're saddled with a goofy name like "The Posse," when you are required to pump your fist and bark on cue, when your host is still star-struck after five seasons on the air—how cool can you be? All the same. Wolff has proven that

he's a competent, if uninspired, musician, and an articulate, if rarely used, sidekick. Still, Arsenio's show has brought more black music ro TV than any other. Though the almost-MTV camera effects are distracting, the Posssoor highest marks for impromptu sit-ins—including a recent guestappeanneby blew York DJ Stretch Armstrong, who called his boy Fat Joe our of beautilized to be presented to the concible with the competence of the subtlew.

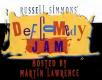
WEIMBERG/O'RRIEN Best known as the ensymbile drummer for Springsteen's E Street Band. Max Weinberg was an unusual choice for bandleader. O'Brien mas senoused to have said he wanted the band "to sound like The Flietstoner" and with the brace-beavy Weinberg Seven he por his wish. As for snappy dialogue. ir's not easy to project from behind a hig drum kir bur Weinberg may just be an untapped comic wellspring. (He gers big laughs for the name alone.) Nor that we'll ever find our with Conan's lame sidekick Andy Richter hogging couch space and airtime. So far. Thanks, that was great" is as lively as the O'Brien/Weinberg banter gets.

SCOTT/CHASE Tom Scort deserves berrer. Not much-but a little better Check the résumé: He's got a Grammy under his belt: his band (unlike his bost) is ready for prime time; he's even got ralk-show handleader experience, albeir on The Pat Saiak Show, Still, Scott can't be forgiven for accompanying Goldie Hawn in a now-infamous, inconceivably bad rendition of "Happy Birthday," Scott and his Hollywood Express are faring better than Chevy Chase rhough, who spends most of the show looking like he'd rather be hiding in the orchestra pit. Is it really necessary for him to chop away aimlessly ar his deskrop keyboard in arrempted accompaniment? We'd rather watch Dionne Warwick infomercials 🖾

Brest Aswood is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles and works at Billboard magazine.



# It's anything but.



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### SIR DUKE

Sister Act 2 director Bill Duke wants to be on Hollywood's A-list, and with good reason.

by Elena Oumano

DIRECTOR BILL DUKE IS SITTING IN his office on the Warner Hollywood Studios lot talking about his new project, Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit (Touchstone), starring Whoopi Goldberg. "Just get the best lawyer for the job," he says to his assistant Bridget, probably referring to legal representation for 19-year-old actor Ron Johnson, Johnson, a South Central L.A. native who played a leading role in last year's Zebrahead and who appears in Sister Act 2 was arrested on the set a few weeks earlier for allegedly raping an extra. a 16-year-old white girl from Long Beach. Bridget starts to run down names of available attorneys, but Duke cuts her off: "We just want the best for the job."

Being the best man for the job is something Duke understands well. Unlike Spike Lee and John Singleton, who've fashioned themselves as auteurs of the African American experience. Duke, an inverenta perfectionist, is busily carving out his nich eas a hired un right in the belly of the best. He wants his name at the old Helly-cause—he's an exceptional galactic states of the control of the contro

Dake's film carer began as an acro, with critically paide performances in which critically paide performances in American Gigds and Producer. Since moving to directing, his crediter—1991's A Bagin Harlman, a period piece based on the Chester Himes novel; 1992's Dap Gowr, a modernist thriller about an underevor mare; and 1993's The Conwery Chile, a melodrama about four jewish widows—indicate to some people a rudderless drift toward the maintenam. For Duke, thought, it's the deliberate course of a pro determined to succeed on chose slone.

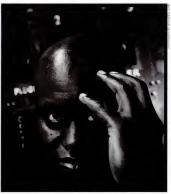
"I'm not trying to make a statement as much as I'm living out my own destiny," Duke says. "I'm having a very difficult time doing this, but I refuse to be defined by someone les's limited perception of who and what I am. It's as simple as that. I don't mind if this industry defines or limits me based on my ability. But if I want to direct a film with all black folks and I have the credentials and ability, I want to be able to do that. If I want to direct A film<sup>3</sup> or dumb things on purpose. I learned the hard way in this industry that they do them out of ignorance."

He won Sitter Act 2 the same way by pitching the best vision of the script. Plus his phone friend Whoopi Goldberg approved. Duke was eager to work with her because he sees her as a fellow artist who's succeeded despite her refusal to conform to Hollywood's sterenAnd Duke admits to feeling the presence "We got the script late," he says, "so we were writing as we went along, Whoopi has a wonderful, brilliant instinct for comedy, and in some way see was able to make things work. In the time we did have... "his voice trails of: "People will judge," he says with resignation, "but I think we did a good by. You'd love to be judged on the aethorists, which was the says with the property of the says with resignation," but I think we did a good by. You'd love to be judged on the aethorists say, but you're judged by how much moment he film makes."

If the film does boffo box office. Duke feels he'll be in a position to check off more items on his long, ambitious wish list. At the top is producing an epic film on the guerrilla war that led to the creation of the world's first black republic, Haiti, Also on the list are various projects being developed through Yagya, his film production company. whose name is Sanskrit for "all work is done in the name and spirit of evolution," Meanwhile, the director's branching out: He's preparing to publish a poetry book and he's working on a theater project. And if a role should come along as significant as the hard-nosed cop he played in the Hughes Brothers' Menace II Society, he'll take it.

If there's a theme that must through Duke's life and work, it's that evolution begins at home. He created the book Bladt Light Fath Ajrian Amerian Hero (text by Paul Carrer Harrison, with an introduction p Danny Glover, published in November by Thunder's Mouth Press) on bart cody's youth wouldn't have to struggle as he did to find their identity. In his essay "Black Heroes," Duke recalls that he was in the firing grade when he came foulf yunderstand the meaning of being black in America:

"On a corkboard," he writes, "the teacher displayed pictures of all who had made America great: Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, George Wäshington, Thomas Jefferson. The pictures were endless. I saw the pride that beamed through my white classmates. The teacher then turned to me and the other lone black child in the class with a sense of letting us know that we had no been forgotren. She



A nonnatuur by denign, Bill Dake in carving out his niche as a hired gas.

a film about Irish immigrants, I want that opportunity. What qualifies me is my humanity."

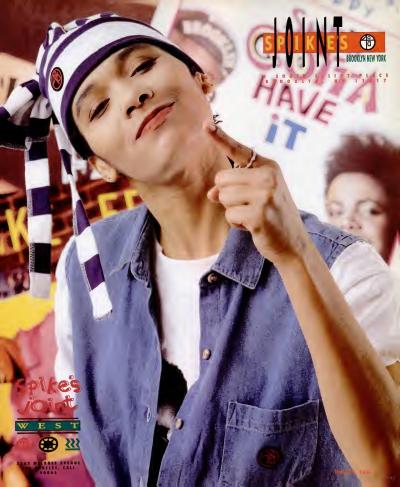
That humanity is what earned Duke the Countery Club assignment. These video caughta whole lot of flak," he says. "They got calls from white Jewish directors who were up for the film: "What the hell does this black guy know about directing a film about Jewish women?" And they don't see that statement as racist. I used to assume people did

types. "I respect her talent and courage," says Duke. "Black folks criticized her looks and the way she wore her hair. White Hollywood said she wasn't attractive enough to be a leading lady. In spite of all that, this film makes her the

highest-paid woman in the history of Hollywood." Sister Act 2—featuring Whoopi and

a group of street kids fighting to keep their high school open—is the sequel to last year's \$350 million megahit.





then presented the class and myself with the three portraits that encapsulated her understanding of "Negro" history. The first was a stoic picture of George Washington Carver, the second a stern Booker T. Washington, and last but not least a brilliant yellow-clad. dark-faced little black Sambo."

Today Duke understands that heroism is often obscured, sometimes deliberately so. Through a collection of short biographies and pictures of famous, forgorten, and unacknowledged African Americans, Black Light provides an overdue corrective

Duke wants to see more of those kinds of heroes roday-not just in books and onscreen, but in the teal world, "It's easy to lie back and say, 'It's all over; it can all go to hell." he says of the current fashion for cynicism. "Our grandfathers and great-grandfathers

could have said that too, but none of them would have survived. Cynicism is the posture of a coward who hides behind a mask of denial and negativity. The strongest of us survived, and

that's the legacy we have to commit to." That's certainly the legacy Bill Duke has committed himself to. Near his office door hangs a black-and-white framed photo: The NBA-size director/actor/writer towers over three smil-

produces one of their high school yearbooks. In a scene straight out of

Luke's "Cowards in Compton" video, the Jem Boy in question is pictured

ing studio-exec types. Someone's drawn a thought bubble over Duke's bald head, saving, "Don't tell anybody that I'm standing on my tippy-toes." They-the better part of Hollywood. white and black-have yet to be told a lot about Bill Duke.

Flows Oumans is the entertainment editor of Lo Ultimo, a Latino monthly, and writes frequently on music and film

ear of a Black Het (ITC) is partly This Is Soinel Tap reconsidered and part-Iv e good old-school besement iem. Coming less then e year after enother quesi-rep mockumentary, CB4. Feer comicelly details the triels and tribulations of an L.A. gengste group cailed Niggaz With Hets (N.W.H.)

as they go on their "itchy Dick Tour." The itchy crew are seen blowing up, breeking up, end reuniting in the name of the hardcore flava and e fet contrect.

N.W.H., who weer outregeous heedgear in homage, they say, to slaves who toiled hatless in the sun, ere: Ice Cold (writer/director Rusty Cundieff), a breided cross between Ices T and Cube: Tastv-Teste (Larry B. Scott), e would-be Eezy-E complete with jheri-curi luice; and Tone-Def (Marc Christopher Lawrence), a kinder and gentler Dr. Dre who by film's end trensforms himself into the Big Man from P.M. Dawn, Gabbing like idiot sevents for the initially very proper documentarian Nina Blackburn (Kasi Lemmons), the trio take her along on a bizarre ride through their own twisted head trinwhere the song "Come Pet the P.U.S.S.Y." is reelly e coded revolutionery call to erms ("Political Unrest Stebilizes Society, Yesl").

rather ungengsteriv extrecurricular ectivities.

Mad botters: Tage-Bel, ice Cold, and Tasty-Teste. SPINAL RAP

Fear of a Black Hat makes you take your thinking caps off.

Built eround pointed send-ups of everything from MTV's The Week in Rock and videos by N.W.A, Public Enemy, C+C Music Fectory, and L.L. Cool J. Fear is chock-full of stock music-biz characters like the bend's doomed menegers (ell killed in gun-releted "eccidents" à le Spinei Tap's drummers), the stege-pess-around-the-neck skeezer Chervi (who's dated "only" 14 celebs), end Darvii (the très fey and massively endowed video choreogrepher). Also iempooned ere N.W.H.'s rivels the Jem Boys, herdcore poseurs whose prep-school pedigrees are "outed" when Ice Cold

sporting J. Crew gear and e very winning smile next to e leundry list of If these quick sketches get a little rew sometimes that's because this is meinly e boy's movie. For instance, even though Bieckburn esks eii the journelistiflipped the script end got her

cally correct questions, by the time the movie's over. Ice Coid's singing the sweetest love songs. in the interim, her every word is e setup for a punch line: so her visit to gun freek Tasty-Taste's armory takes on shades of a wicked Looney Tunes skit, Check out Tasty on how en Uzi is similer to en euto-focus camere: "You just. Spray, The Aree."

What hits the merk in Feer of a Bleck Het has everything to do with how it deals with its targeted issues: misogyny, gang violence. end enti-white sentiment in rep. Riackburn attemnts in all earnestness to eddress this short-list of hot topics but she never ectually gets to do it. N.W.H. keep bumrushing her show, bogging her

down in trying to maintain her professional composure end, ultimately, to steer the discussion awey from the size of her butt. Thoughtfully, Bleckburn is never demeaned or insulted, just extremely flustered by not getting e streight enswer to enything. Feer of e Bleck Het's humor comes out of cieveriv shooting holes through ell the serious stuff. Which is just fine because N.W.H. mix their goofy gags, self-indulgent monologues, subtie in-jokes, end wacky video spoofs like good DJs puiling vintage breakbeats from e crate. ---Gary Dauphin



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#### HAPPY TRAILS

Gus Van Sant's Even Cownirls Get the Blues nets even

hy Hilton Als

LORRAINE BRACCO (IDELORES DEL RUIY in Ever Cougrir (der the Bluer) really ligg k.d. lang, and whar Lorraine Bracco really wants in her life is k.d. lang (cosongwriter and singer on the film's soundtrack). Lorraine and k.d.: the sagebrush in their voices and a horse between their legs and the stars above thair head;

At least I'd like to rhink so, this being my desire, a fantasy inspired by Gus Van Sant's film version of Cougirls, a film about the poetics of female space.

That space—poetic in 'Van Sant's cyes because he cannot inhabit it, being a man, a fact which makes these cowgirls as unobtainable as desire and observed from a distance like desire, too—is the film's context, which presents women who make choices about other women and women who are represented alone with horses and the sky and each other.

The longing that cowgirls have for one another as they are glimpsed in close-up and medium shors, a longing which evokes the prairie twang, the vastness of emotional and geographical space out on the range, was envisioned by Tom Robbins, the author of the novel upon which Gowgirls is based. Robbins wrote of girls who grow up wanting to be cowgirls and live amongst each other as such, with no applogies and no role models to over-apologies and no role models to over-

These women, who have little if any relationship to men, is what Gus Van Sant has wrested from Robbin's novel. What Van Sant's left behind was this: the novel's ultimately male-centric (tead:sentimental) view of women who rake the high road without Him Grom Robbins Dad, whoneyer)

As the American cinema's most valual commensors of the inter-land ticks that define us as social creatures, Gus Van Sant constructs films which are nod maps of the internal ticks: a profound distrust of his identity as white and male and purveyor of privilege. His perplexing, albeit compelling, work—Dragtown Guebey, My Dun Pristate Idabs—succeeds, in large parts, on his ability to sir back, away from a society that is devoid of innuendo of irone, a society that presumes it represents a people it does not know.

Gus Van Sant: "Basically, what I left out of the movie was the straight stuff." There is one "straight" seex seen in the film and it is presented as a parody. When Sissy Hanshaw (Uma Thurman) goes out on a date with Julian (played as a noncharacter by the singularly ungifted Kenan Reeves) she ends up in bed with two of Reeves's consorts, one of whom is played by Sean Vunne, the arboth by Crisini Glover.

girl, a lover of cowgirls—firsr wirh Bonanza Jellybean (Rain Phoenix), and then Delores Del Ruby.

In this establishing shot, the camera pans slowly, slowly up, a shot remniscent of the establishing shot at the gate of Xanadu, the castle built by Citizen Kane, Orson Welles's most convincing portrait of patriarchal power as symbol. Van Sant's reinvention of the meaning of that shot and the memory

A reach of their nwa: (from left) Gos Van Sant, Rain Phopoly, and Larraine Bracca

Young, who is styled to resemble early Warhol superstar Ultra Violet, enjoys Sissy's body but is obligated to react to Glover's balding head, salivating face, not so much as representative of something she desires as someone she has been conditioned to desire. Warbul—one of Van Sant's influences explored this to beautiful, hortific ends in his Kitustria.

Van Sant's filmic form—style as irony—is established when we see the first shot of the Rubber Rose Ranch, the ranch where Sissy eventually hitchhikes her life inro (finally) being: a cow-

of Wellet's portrait informs, italicizes Delores Del Ruby's own vision as she presents it: one of an all-female utopia. Delores, who have her own Rosebud, her own mind, cracks her whip as her calling card and them announces: "She came to me in a vision." Who is she? "The less to her call it: the organization of women. Delores Del Ruby knows how utopias have failed before and may fail again. This fact does not diminish her hope. Contrained Pracco's perfectly cast in this role because that hope is a fear are of Lorarius Bracco's perfectly as an in this probability.

Lorraine Bracco told me: "You know, when Siskel or Ebert—I can't remember which one—married thar African American woman, I had a lot more respect for him, you know? Don't ask me why. I just do. Know what I mesa?"

The complex theories growing out of a commin hind of insellectual (and actual) lechian senaratism—itself growing out of the '70s-included the idea that the only true utonia was a female-based one, run as a collective and at the deliberate exclusion of rules established by the patriarchy. (One of the coweirls in the film removes furniture from a mom. proclaiming. "Rid vourselves of these masculine influences!") Writers such as Ti-Grace Arkinson Iill Johnston (author of The Lesbian Nation, a classic), and Germaine Greer attempted to put the female hody back together again to instill Her with pleasure with power to deerase Her from being seen (or not seen) as an endless fount from which male desire could take and take (Sulvia Plarh wrore of how she perceived this: "It can sew, it can cook/it can ralk talk talk (It mostles ")

In the the book, Robbins, the male author, cannot let his male presence on unwarranted: Sissy eventually marries Julian, But Van Sant, who lives ourside of all his characters with a kind of longing (the husrlers in My Oun Private Idaho: the drug addicrs in Drugstore Cowboy), and almost never has straight men as his focal point, does not entertain the specter of Men. In the film, Sissy has a masturbatory fantasy about Julian when she first makes her way to Rubber Rose and this is the last we see of him He is never missed. The emorional center of each of Van Sant's films (discounting the not very interesting Mala Noche, his first feature) are women, the memory of women (the absent mother in Idabo).

Van San's emotionality is manifest in the removal of the two central of the two central in the removal of the two central expands of the sand central cases. As a meroad which is a meroare of Congrit's is a Warholian absence the core of Congrit's is a Warholian absence the the communic exercises so as not to find this or her belowed empty of meanife as the congrit of the sand is a single lateral than the congrit of the sand is a single lateral than the congrit of the sand is a single lateral than the sand is sand in the sand is a single lateral than the sand is a single lateral than the sand is sand in the sand in



ummen (Gramercy) is a variation on the buddy-movie theme, with Mario Van Peobles and Christopher Lambart tamed up à la Danny Glovar and Mai Glibson in Latrial Waapon. Lika Glovar's Murtaugh, Van Peeblas's charactar, Cole, has the brains, and, like Glibson's Riggs, Lambart plays the loose-cannon wacko, Dani. The setting Isn't the streets of L.A. but your genaric South American jungle, whare an Uzi is like an American Express card you can't leave home...). So it's quilt a surprise whan Big Daddy Kana and Eric B. & Rakim appear briefly on a club stage rapping indicated that principal is when

Picard in Star Trek: The Naxt Generation). That drug smugglers don't have a clue where to look, but each of our heroes has only half of the puzzla: Dani knows whara the boat is dockad, Cola knows the boat's nama. If they can outlast the smugglars, they'll be home frae. The problem, of course, is they don't antirely frust each other.

They also don't hava the slightast Idaa how to fly an airplana. Which is why thay anlist tha sarvicas of Kadaam Hardison, who's a hoot as tha punch-drunk pilot Izzy who filas tham to tha film's climax. Walting for tham is yat anoth-ar TV rafugaa, Denis Laary, tha chain-smoking, Insult-spawing MTV mastar of sarcasm, who



They'll get you: Merie Ven Peobles (Celej and Christopher Lambert (Deni).

#### JUNGLE BROTHERS

Gunmen isn't all buddy-buddy.

two guys at the bar drassed in Hawaiian shirts and lais turn around and wa raaliza it's Dr. Dra and Ed Lovar—they thought they wara going to Club Mad, but wound up way off course and totally out of season.

Gunman is just that kind of action-adventure—you navar quita know what to axpact. Aftar all, there arpratty high stakes hare: Danl and Cola ara frantically searching for a hidden \$400 million fortune. Tailing them is a group of drug smugglers that, in a moral about-faca rola, is headed by Patrick Stawart (Captain Jean-Luc affactivaly transfars his small-scraan charm onto tha big scraan as tha ica-cold killar Armor O'Mallay.

Combining racognizable TV parsonalities and rappers with the Lethal Weapon-esqua Van Peeblas and Lambart team creatats an unpradictability that anargizas tha film and kaapa it moving along. As a follow-up to Posse, Gunmen is another action-adventure feather in Van Peeblas's cap. Ha may not consciously be trying to be the black Harrison Ford, but that's what it looks like from hars. — Varonica Chambars

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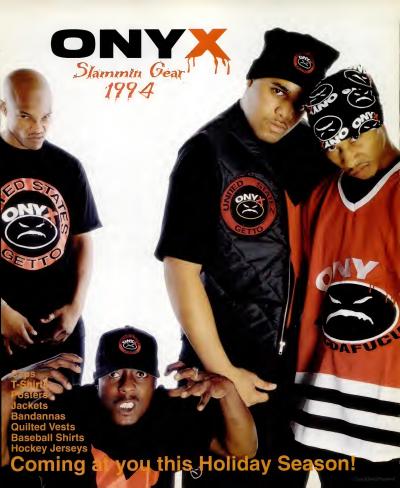
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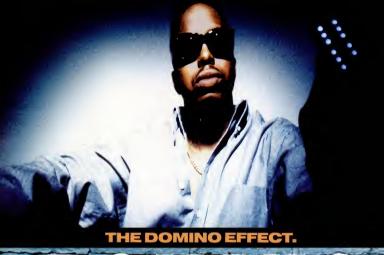




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# REVOLUTIONS



THE STORY OF

JAMAICAN MUSIC

by Rob Kenner

"Play to mite RAB/Want all my people to see We're bubbling on the Top to 100 utsi like a mighty dread." So sang Bob Martiey on "Roots. Rook, Regges," one of the many great tunes that doesn't appear on Tougher Plan 7 boyl, Island Records is four-CD box set tracing the music's remarkable regamuffir-to-riches story. In this year that Bob's. crossover prophecy came true, he table that helped make him an international star is doing its bit to fill the world in on the half that's new beat both.

For many people, regigae means simply 60b or Shabba, but these bic locins account for only three of the Stacks in this sweeping survey. "Today there is a greater output of music per capita in Jamasic hair in any other country in the word," white Chris Blackwell, founder of Island Records, in the box 65 people boodlet. "It's incredible how powerful this tiller lead of Jamasics in: So profile can so powerful, in fact, that the task Island has set for Itself aeems tougher than copy—affirm of impossible. Can it syeem of make be sequenced orthor outpressible. The official intervention of the set of the control of the set of

gospel music and intercepted signals from Miami radio stations playing American R&B, soul, and country.

Island's original plan was to issue 90 Cbs over a period of five months in 1926—90 custs to celebrate, Jamaica's 30th anniversary of independence from the British empire. In classic regigae fashion, the sets in own ayear list, and it's been edited down to a more manageable—and marketable—size. The four-disc format is modeled on situation's extremely successful Marley box, Songs of Freedom, a size as that can only begin to suggest the richness of Jamaican music. But it still isounds without.

Uninitated listeners will probably be surprised at what they find in regigale 'past I'wh' does the pop of the' 'My Boy Lollpop' have to do with herb or Jah Rastfaler' Nothing, but this multimillion-selling sax manh (allegody featuring a young Rod Stewart on harmonica) helped put Island Records on the map in 1964. What is Curita Mayfeld? Cluene Maless', 'doing here? O' the themate to Curiz of Navarona? And let's not even menton Prince Bustler's courtroom skits or Yell-common's middog enforcements for Grose, Jahrancha Hathup, Don't and let an experiment of the common shits or Yell-common's middog enforcements for Grose, Jahrancha Hathup, Don't all effect, engage is eccentric music, and even in sticking to an obvious all effect, engage is eccentric music, and even in sticking to an obvious

The trio led by drummer PAUL MOTIAN, featuring guitarist Bill Frisell and saxophonist Joe Lovano, turns out nimble chamber jezz recordings on damn near a quarterly basis. The group's latest, On Broadway, Volume III (MNT), in ortable for tre guest legends—bassist Chartle Haden and altoist Lee Konits. The material is standard fare like "Skylark," "Pennies From Heaven," and "How Deep Is the Ocean"; gorgeous song drained of clil imaginarity possibility, one might think Ewithese twisted bopheads turn 'em inside out anyhow, mostly thanks to Frieell'e crazy-quilt guitar style, which seems to encompose cowboy twang, jozzbo scholarship, punk abandon, and chamber sell efficement.



Motion and Hoden have played together for decades now. They swang Keith Interest sight ness in the "Mon and now maintain at the openlighting the gossamer guillotine of pianist Geri Allen. Haden's presence gives this usually bose-less group the boomy, supple flow that is his hallmark, inspiring Motian to punchy, staccoto beats that strike these eare as borderline his phop.

Konitz and Lovano, meantwhile, supply hand, eleek edges. Konitz, who's been bad since the '50s, is one of the few poet-Parkerphiles who figured out how to tall his own etcry in Bird'e shadow. Lovano is becoming a cimilar kind of figure for the '90s, working hie stuff out under the unblinking insectoid stare of Parker's heir apparent. Ornette Coleman. Konitz and Lovano's a cappellad duet on 'Weaver of Dreams' may be an bugged asy out can give without disturbing the peace.

If you think modern juzz is only about some of 'deep cerebral chetract-type shit then younselt on get hip to RAHSAM ROUAND KIRK. Rohaman, who mastered the curt of playing harmonies on three excephences (plus a nose flute), was as deep as they come. But he didn't mind cutting the fool, buckin't the funk, and even talking about east to the crowd. He also believed that trepresenting yourself as a black musician meant going beyond categories and pedigrees and making any style of song into your own.

A great introduction to this fanny, fantabulous musical shaman is his 1971 live ablum. Right Moments, which the facilist althino however-released along with most of his major. Atlantic recordings of the '80s and '70s. Rahseam's opening rape for sereral of the cuts are worth local all by their lonesome. Take the intra for the buoyant title track, where he describes bright moments on "like being with your dravorte love and y'all sharing the same ice cream dieh and you get mod when she gets the lant drop and you have to take he in your arms and get it the other way.

A philosopher to the core, Rahsaan was the George Clinton of '7s jazz. His balf-sung, half-blown flute improve on Bright Moments are no joke, either. The Pentecoetal brimstone he and his tenor drop on "fou'll Never Get to Heaven" will make you pray for Dionne Warwick's soul (if that psychic-network jive hasn't cleady). The overall carmival/vevalue to wite that Rahsaan and his band laid on this Keystone Korner crowd two decades ago will help all those raised on samples understand how once upon a time live black mueic could sway potential suicides into giving life seeond chance.

(continued) little scatterbrained. There is rarely e common thread from song to song, end eny ettempt to explain how one led neatly to the next would be foolish.

The full story of Jamaican music can only be lold through a systemetic study of the log studies and producters—Duke Reld Clement "Cosson" Dodd, Leafle Rel, Leafle Re

One benefit of heving such a wider ange of songs in one place is that the long-running floud between dancehall lowers and fires of the notesiar variety ("real" regione, as they would heve if may at lest fizzie out. People, open your ears: it's all reggase, as they would heve if may at lest fizzie out. People, open your ears: it's all reggase, Nowhere is this point more for cefully under them in the version of "On Carolina" that open end close Tougher Than Tough. Recorded 33 years apart, the Folkes Britchers, by hydroid sale-boogle build end end shade will be under the son of t

And mine they do. Demick. Morgan's "Tougher Than Tough" (disc one) was recently yo covered by Louide Culture as the demontal armant "Fuelle Den't Fear." Shabbe Ranks's stat big hit, "Ting. "A-Ling," has its forerunner in Demin Alcapone's "Teech Children' (less two big. Exc Denaldson's 191" Cherry Dr. Baby' (disc two) has been updated by aweyors from Super Cart to Uselon the Tolling Stones. "Feel Flock," the pringht most for Willem's "A "Pranagideon Time" (disc time glass been included over high the state of the Jamaica. Rapping over beats was started on the islend—by pioneering DJ Daddy U RO—and the remix wes linvented them, to.

All right, all right, enough history—you want to know whether Tougher Than Tough has all your favority, but that's not relatly the point enywey. Don't buy this box just to have another copy of Jimmy Cliff's "The Herder They Come" or Black Linus" is Saless Who 3 Comings to Jimme." Don't by this box to hear Bobbsing "No Woman No Cry live at the Lycoum Bellcoum for the ten-thousandh time. By it was not to the self-thousand th

#### SALT-N- PEPA

#### Very Necessary - Next Pleteau/London

Very Messaary finds that 44 Page once gas in severable their cell styled using image and mass gaphs accretions the district of their severable that the severable to the severab

At that beat, the ambittions strikenay of the pay-fines of RLB, discookals, and new jijl swyls, the force nativarily, so = 70 for the Das & 1 fairs and "Mattat beat". Of the times, injust one combination feet to a milition, to contrive to be convincing, like that discookal debut, "Process May," "Second Feet," when the mission feet in an amount amountain discount and the parties of the payment and otherwise strong displays of a field-R-span and dyspina skills. Yet the provision for yet secondary or as condition that two such many unities price, some plays and payment contains a secondary or the payment of the secondary or the payment of payment of the payment contains a secondary or the payment of the payment of the payment of the payment of the payment contains a secondary or the payment of the payment of the payment of the payment of the payment payment of the payment

refrains can almost be foreiven. The good news for those who are tired of the pedantic, message-ridden "Let's Talk About Sex" overkill is that this time around the young ladies save the PSA on AIDS for the end of the elburn and head straight for the bedroom. The one constant in all of S-N-P's musical phases and identities has been their exuality. On Very Necessary, they sttempt to broaden their vemp appeal by appropriating the attitudes behind rently popularized female rep persoe-"hoes," "macktresses," and "gangstabitches"-without assuming those stereotypical roles. The concept is full of possibilities that are unfortunate





#### BARRINGTON LEVY

Barrington • MCA

Deep in adancehall session, chere's nothings wester on omer flightening than the sudden attack of Barringston Levy's voice. Cutring through the swining smoke and pounding bast like a bot from the hereafter, his signature will has become a rallying cry that can ignite a crowd with one flick of the D'y's crossfader. Songs like '21 Girls Shatter, 'Under Me Sensi, "Here I Come," and especially the blood-hilling matterpiers' Warderer' have tien above the normal ebb and flow of the latest "hot shoot" on caulced status artianed by very few dancehall cuts.

His first record for MCA should win him new listeners without alienating the bona fide dancehall massive. That's no easy feat, but as Barrington is quick to



point our, "dunchall music" deen't mean what most people think it does. In Juniaci, "dunchall" describes repatricular sound not reple; it just refers to the music played in dance halls, which could mean Whitrery Houston as easily as Shabba Ranks. In that win he offers "Vice Versa Luve," a virrusous cappella performance that defice actegorization and demands to be taken on its own terms. "There's too many bopeless soul/and ragamuffits soldiers," Barriignon sings with a consciousness and conviction that can only be learned through decades of experiments.

Some will sneet that Burrington is a crossover abum. Fine—"fine"s how eye is joys snogslike "90% There" and "Nothing's Changed," then let's have more crossover. As long as the raw roughneck syel is still being ideal unstrured in Brooklyn and Kingston, there's no reason to prevent a wice like Barrington's from reaching new ears. Rocklemathy, the raw and roughneck are represented here in "Work," a bogle-licious selection featuring the raucous toasting of Jipsy King.)

In fact, Barringian takes its biggest risks in updating the standards "Under Me Sensi" and "Murderen." Why atmper with perfection? "Muderer is the more successful of the two, it's been totally reconceived with a jeep beat and poet ir ap interludes courtesy of Rakim. There's still no substitute for the original 12-inch on Jah Life records, but this one's a killer noncheless.



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#### VARIOUS ARTISTS

Blacker Than That

than-thou rappers.

Black Rock Coalition Records lust when you thought so-called black music couldn't get any more triflin' with its unoriginality, repetition, and trendiness, the Black Rock Coalition comes to the rescue with a funky antidote. Two years ago, the first BRC compilation. The History of Our Future. saved us from a summer of "hip hop smoothed out on the R&B tip." Now, a collection of 12 bands called Blacker Than That offer an escape from the recycled, empty boasting of harder-



While the 1991 album was a poignant sonic snapshot of black America, the follow-up is more like a blooming bouquet of unique, colorful sounds sprouting from the influential roots of artists as diverse as Parliament-Funkadelic, Led Zeppelin, Sly & the Family Stone, and Black Flag.

On this soulful soiourn, we're transported from the sublime (Sophia's Toy's folky ballad "Lifetime") to the surreal ("Green Balloon," Synaestisia's "open-ended fairy tale," and D'Tripp's string-enhanced head-nodder, "Run From the World"). Blacker takes us from the mosh pit (D-Xtreme's venomous anti-police-brutality cut "N.Y.D.S.") to the twilight zone (Suburban Dog's "Home, On the Range"). Drek Du Boyz and Menace get deep into that old-school funk with the jams "Contradictions" and "Detroit (Old School Funk Remix)," while Faith's "Commercialized" evolves from a pastoral rocker to an appealingly mysterious roots-reggae number.

Though the compilation isn't too heavy on the politics. Women in Love's title track, Navigator's "Stolen Child," and "Man With the Power" by female hard-rock quartet PMS (which stands not for

#### **NEW KINGDOM**

New Kingdom? Just a couple niggas revaling in nic confusion that rock end hip hop made into pop possibility. Heavy Load, their debut, is 40 minutes of strictly out shit—drug-induced lyrics swimming through e jazzmospheric heze. igh the purple forests of hyperbolic obstraction. His lyrics sprawl and reel while his mysteus partner Sebastian spends his album time ealing tentative poetry in a distorted voice

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the obvious but for "power, mon-

ey, and sex") serve lyrical food for

thought on race and gender issues.

If you can't find Blacker Than

er backwerd-pleying organ. Qhostlore like "Lazy Smoke" or "Cheap Thrills" evokes images of boh free-fell spookery: "Done smoked the moon end the stars/Will you catch me if I'm flyin' this far?/I done seen the tides turn III/My closet still fulle no frills." Meenwhile, the fizzy and of dirty, scratched-up funk records fells like synthetic rain on Nosaj's jaded jazz-

Not that ell this experimentation works, mind you: The elbum sometimes descende clous, undeclaherable rambling. And when New Kingdom start to take the a bit too seriously, particularly in thrash outs like "Mother Nature" and "Good Times," Load gets a little too heavy for the funk. Overcompensating for a lack of "street credity"? Maybe. But what's hip hop without an identity crisis?

Like the debut of their lebelmates Freestyle Fellowship, though, Load is an axam-

ple of ertists transcending their product. A calebration of the black-light world of the subconscious, Heavy Load is site with intrinsoles—chiln's chetter, movie blins, intens on veiled in feedback and wahh padals. Load plays like a Penra's box-unremarkable on first intion, but, ance apened, setting free e flutter of sound that comes flapog out like owekened bats. This is

### RELAX AND COLOR YOUR HAIR THE SAME DAY.

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Christmas comes but once a year, and so, coincidentally, do Christmas albums, Not the sort of albums that you just slap on when everyone's nogged out and forgotten the second verse to "Silent Night"-no boyee! The subject at hand is the always delightful, sometimes kitschy realm known as the celebrity Christmas album. The "whodathunkit?" factor plays a major hand in the appreciation of X-mas offerings, which is

key io making CHRISTMAS AT LUKE'S HOUSE (LUKE) a conceptual masterpiece. Unfortunately, only a few cuts were available at press time, but just hearing H-Town grinding out "Knockin' Boots at Christmas" ("Ho ho ho, baby/I gotta bag full of goodies") made me wanna get busy wit some mistletoe, ASAP. Oily and holy; the cross-pollination of the sacred and the pro-

fane is nothing less than inspiring.

So, short of the perverse reality of Santa Luke, whatta we got? Christmas albums from exactly the folks you figured would Aaron Neville put them out. I mean, Aaron Neville records "Ave Maria" on his pop records; the damage he could do come holiday time approaches the fantastic, AARON NEVILLE'S SOULFUL CHRISTMAS (ARM) record is a delicious



Song," "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow," "White Christmas") and the God iams ("Silent Night," et al.). Neville gives said material his customary melismatic joie de vivre, making this a groovy collection for all.

Despite its portentous title, Boyz II Men's CHRISTMAS INTERPRETATIONS (MOTOWN)

Christman leterpretationn Boyz II Men W. is also keen, if not utterly predictable. It's filled with the soaring, slickly produced (yet still slightly flat) harmonies that have made the Boyz the recipients of a seriously large contract. BIIM work their a cappella acumen on "Silent Night," and mix the snowy standards with new X-mas tunes destined to become classics!

What would you expect from Be Be and Ce Ce Winans? A little Urban Contem-

porary sheen, a little bogus new jack production, a healthy dose of the Big Guy upstairs? Bingo! You get all that and more on FIRST CHRISTMAS (CAPITOL), plus the always gorgeous voice of Ce Ce, who does serious justice to "Silver Bells" and helps turn "Jingle Bells" into a buppie love extravaganza. And finally, even though we

all know that the best line in "Hip Hop Hooray" is the one about being "older than Lou Rawls," the man has pipes for days, AS CHRISTMAS IS THE TIMES (BLUE NOTE/MAN-HATTAN) makes clear. When it comes to the out-of-body Christmas-record jolt we all strive for, Lou's jazzy take on the standards is just the hoary, daddy-o fix so festive this time of year. Everybody say Ho!



"Same ol' SH+T"









Co Co Peniston may light candles and turn off the phose on "I'm in the Mood" (AMM, but her single has none of that plush bedroom sound. With bass samples riffing their ways toward hip hop breakdowns, only the strings impart any nostalgia. Forget Peniston's World Wart III tiller this music renders 1985 romantic history.—] nust Kickin it "(Columbia), Xecope's personable jam, is silkier, but then these Altanta women are more country, Jermaine Dupri's production seems influenced by none other than Basehed: Xecope solt the besures of laid-back haming out while comball made voice runs from.

molosses in the background....For the deepest shock of the new. hear Joi's "Sunshine & the Rain" (ERG). No bridge, no chorus, no nothing here, just a chantish melody and bass-and-guitar groove in the middle of which Joi, in hypnotically reasonable and beautiful voice, sings how she keeps feeling that pressure" and needs "a boost." Her

remarkable betamen rivals Sada. And Dallas Austin's skeleiach production affords genutine minimalist payofis; lot succeeds in making daylight seem like the rurset essence... "What's Next" (Clettrio ack Lednes on the New School. "Here Come the Lords" (Pendulum/ERGI) boast Lords of the Underground. Both singles coast to hit LONS build rundonness into their rap—it jumps from his to that, yet it never makes that much of anything, even its Memphis Horns sample. The Lords manage drama with heir faced overture even if this single locks the troble authority of least time's 'Chief Recker'. "Super Callows three regage mixes of 'Dolly My Bebry' (Columbial with four hip hop mixes by Sean' Patty' Combs and Jessie West that bring on a moanin Mary. Bigs. They snoke, and the parting of Cart and Bligs added dimensals to this particular fove letter... "The Return of the Cray One' (Tommy Bey/TNT), by Digital Underground, is highly realized comedy. The groove fully deserves the adjective 'Cilintonesegue', the jokes work, and when Diy mup up the volume and let their title II, it's floct out brilliant' 'Cilintonesegue', the jokes work, and when Diy mup up the volume and let their title II, it's floct out brilliant' 'Cilintonesegue', the jokes work, and when Diy mup up the volume has not be the priven prove kicks, Zapp & Roger's Mary and Melloy' (Reprise), a new mixed into Roger Toutann numbers, effert the Driven crouse."

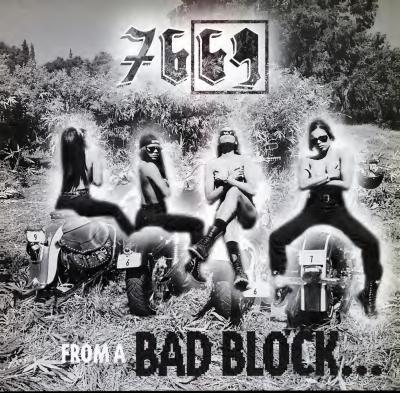
"Mega Gardelley" (Reprise), a new mixed into Roger Toutann numbers, effert the Driven crouse."

"Mega Gardelley" (Reprise), a new mixed into Roger Toutann numbers, effert the Driven crouse."



light and testy brand of feat funk. while "Hoses of Acid par" (Astrolwerks Caroline) is a four-song 12-inch that theore like leightning without over accept joing the One. Working with Sheep on Drugs, Consoldered, and Ministry these days instead of Sty & Robbies (or even Trever florn, the '80-being, you know, over), Graves Jense drives into three strictly high-performance mixes of "Sex Drive" (Island Red Label). "Impress your friends" Jones invites in that old monster-movie MC voice of hear. And with full on tracks like bees, you can, we sen if the assumit will have you wondering where the chill-out zone is.... For Teny Ton Ton feet and Intro cooling out is a ciach. The former's perfect "Anniversary," (Wing/Mexcury) comes in three mixes that combine for almost 20 minutes of huge-hearted and fine-edged so lastinging, Intro's "Come Isside" (Mintell class had a conservation worm profile than "Anniversary," but in fact it's a real time sung with real verve, as the mixes showcasing the vocals prove. Whether working with good memories or double entenders, says like I tony Ton Tone and Intro dere to be a little traditions.

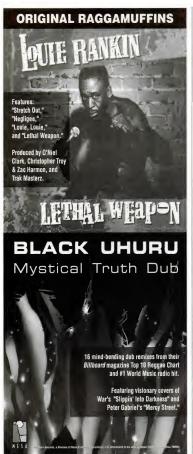




Featuring The Hit Single "So High"

# 7669 - The Year Of The Sexual Revolution. El-Boog-e (7), Big Ang. (6), Shorti (1 Forti) (6), Thicknezz (9) \*\*MUSIC FO YO HEAD"





#### IIS3

Hand on the Torch Pllue Nute.
A phone call from Capitol
Records could have spelled
the end for the young soul
prebels of US3. These London
DJs had been shamelessly
sampling the Blue Note catalogue, and a message from
Capitol—official guardiams
of the Blue Note archives—
in January '92 had them shaking in their shoes. Bur instead
of a sha vin court the Capitol



of a day in court, the Capitol brass offered them a recording contract. The result, Hand on the Torch, is that rare jazz-rap mix that takes jazz's rhythmic kick ro the front of the house.

US3 remind us that what made jaze in the '50s and '60s so singular was not just be horn riffing but the synopasion, the tempo, the accenting, the odd time signatures—the crazy rhythms. It's no coincidence that the two strongess cuts here are driven not by horn samples but by extended pianot racks. Herbie Hancock's moody, cubast 'Cantaloupe Balm' propeis 'Cantaloup (Flip Fantasia),' the record's first single, while Horace Silver's cheeky, blues-drenched 'Song for My Father' launches 'Eleven Long Year,' a munber on which British-born Jamasican Tukka

Yoot toasts against the riddim. Hand on the Terch also enlists Brooklyn rappers Rabsaan and Kobie Powell, who trade spirited fours on "I Got Ir Goin" On," and the live playing of several young British jazz cats. The effect of all the eelecticism is, unexpectedly, more than the sum of its parts.

Several numbers on Torchare.

Several numbers on I arm have relaxed, acid-igaz-like grooves that werge on the forgettable. On US3's best cuts, though, the oftoverlooked physicality of bebop hooks up with the poly nhythms and production genius of hip hop, and the Art Blakey, Thelonious Monk, and Donald Byrd samples spell more than just melodic flourish.

-Scott Timberg

#### XSCAPE Hummin' Comin' at 'Cha + So So Del/Columbia

I know whet you're thinking: "Not another girl group!" But here come Xseape.—Kendi, Tremba, and siblings LaTeche end Temike.—knocking eround in U.S. Nevy overells, brandishing finger rings and bandannas over crisp 'dos, and showing enough crooked-lip ection to be the gangsta bliches Apache wets his pents for.

Thanks to T.C., BWY, Jedes, and her solon-ness Mary J. Bilge, here solys it does mean a thing if you got that new jill swing and a voice to beot. And 'I'm and general renth' X.cope can aling their cases off. Discovered end produced by fellow Allantina Jammiah Durgi (Tibe braided manchilid who kick-started fris Kross), X.cope debut with Vimumin' Comin' of 'U'ha, a piethol i'd fall sea-wid with the coming of the coming o

mass and snarp orum sicks as the name of the game for Xeape, and the first sleight, "Just Ricks. in! R," is eventh in prooves as the girls spoot "Kick off your shoes and relazy your feet/And party on down to the Xeape beet." That Xeape beet throsts love and mo! lovs. The throughing "With You," nudged elong by slinky planor lifts, throws more ball into the hormonal weters, while "Understending," a slow jam for the neughty "bos, sould july muses, "New care we com-

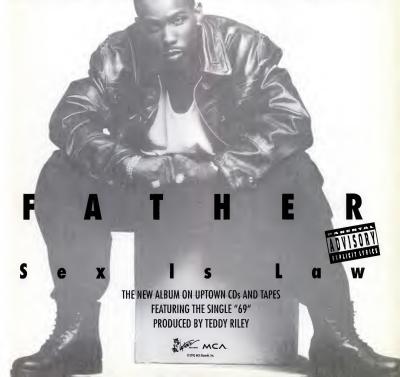
uifully muses, "How can we commicate if you don't hear what I say?" The questions and the emotions cli-

The questions and the emotions climex on the somer, gaspel-driven "is My Living in Vain." A remake of the cleasic spiritual, the song's fluid maturity proves that Xscape heve done their vocel homework; as the foursome stretch their sweetly sensuel chords to the mountaintop, schoos of Aretha Frenklin, Cheke Khen, and church choirs ring out.

Hummin' Comin' et 'Cha is e lesson in raw, from-the-heert crooning, B-glir style. A in' to accond-guessing Xscope's potentiel either. They just may wind up being the glir group to breek awey from the pack. —Kevin Powell



# JUST WHEN YOU THINK YOU KNOW HOW IT WORKS, SOMEONE CHANGES THE RULES...





Come Eplay

check out their new single & video
"come and play with me"
(the follow up to their smash hit "teddy bear")



from the e.p.



on Scotti Bros. Records



#### BLOOD OF ABRAHAM Future Profits - Ruthless/Relativity

Jewish, proud, and saying I loud, Blood of Abraham take the framework of Afrocentric hip hop and plug in their own identity politics. Like a rabbinical Public Enemy, they announce, "Hebrew school is in session," send shout-outs to the 12 tribes of Israel, and, of course, make reference to their circumcisions.

That the formula works so well is a testimony to the successes of the hip hop nation. Thanks to the groundwork laid by PE, BDP, and others, black nationalism can function as a model for any cultural movement. Fear of a Black Planer became Kim Gordon's "fear of a female planer," House of Pain brought bagpies to B-boydom. These appropriations are less ripoffs than tributes—reminders that different demographics can find a common ground.

Not that BOA aren't afraid to attack anti-Semitism in hip hop, pointing out on the ironically titled "Slick to Your Own Kind" that "The devil ain't a JewSo lell mew hoth efuck are you referring po/Tever heard of Ethiopia my brother?/Talking about the Mother/But you're ignorant like the other." Still, they 're at their most interesting when they link Zionism and Arcoentrism. Stabbed 9 the Selecele "attacks the history of Western



imperialism in Africa—particularly Christian missionaries' suppression of Ethiopian Jewry. And as they tell one redneck Christian in "Southern Comfort," "The God you pray to is a black Jew."

Understandably afraid that they'll come off as a novelly act, rappers Benyad and Mazik work hard to demonstrate their rhyme skills. They get a nice jazzy flow going over the tinkling piano of 'Stabbed By the Steeple,' and on "I'm Not the Man" Benyad could pass for Guru as he glides over a smooth bass line. Unfortunately, though, whenever they leaven their shitck with more traditional boasting and dissing, they start to ramble.

If anything, BOA underplay their hand; they only throw in one tiny snatch of sampled Hebrew, and one can imagine some wild tracks built up around cantorial chanting. I guess they wanted to be subtle, but in this game, the point is to be louder than a bomb —Ted Friedman



# LETHAL INJECTION

THE NEW ALBUM - NOVEMBER '93

PRIORITY

#### ORNETTE COLEMAN Beguty le a Bare Things The Complete Atlantic Recordings • Rhino/Atlantic

Ornette Coleman once said "Sometimes I play harmy Sometimes I play said But the condition of being glive is what I play all the time "

In that sense, the composer and saxophonist is a blues man, though his

music has been labeled "Free lays" nearly from the beginning Rased on jazz ves for he and his colleggues came up on behan and played improvised music. And free it is, harmonically and rhythmically, though still anchored in structure and still swinging. But Ornette's music is the blues because he trught himself and his cohorts to be concerned with the moment\_instead of chord changes and keys\_ and to play what they were "presently feeling " as he put it. "You just hear it-like heautiful thoughts "

The result of this theoretical invention is even %-some years later startling. Omette's alto sound is a raw streak of emotion—honest direct, naked—and the sound of the quartet (with trumpeter Don Cherry, bassist Charlie Haden, drummer Billy Higgins, and, later, Ed. Blackwell) is fresh, uninhibited, grooving

The six CDs that make up Beauty Is a Rare Thing (part of Rhino's ambitious Atlantic jazz

reissue series) comprise Ornette's complete Atlantic recordings, covering 1959 to 1961 and presented in chronological order (some tracks were originally held in the vaults for a decade or more). These are some of his earli-

for any occasion...

plus six previously unreleased tracks and seven more released only in Japan.

This music was controversial in its time (and still is) because each memhar of the band improvised simultaneously basing their musical decisions on the song's melody (not its chords) and on the other musicians' contributions In come cores ... "Frentually ""Forerunner ""The Circle With a Hole in the Middle"\_that internlay is freewheeling and wide-ranging and to this

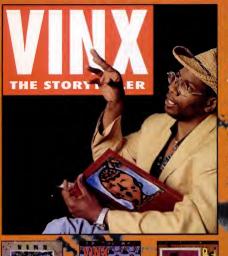
day sounds avant-garde. In other songs-"Ramblin' ""Ilna Muy Bonita " "Lonely Woman." "Congeniality," the previously unreleased "I Heard It on the Radio"—the interrotion is more unified and the result is tart. lyrical. sometimes finger-poppin'.

Omatte at 63 is still making brilliant music and his influence is widely felt, from jazz to rock to the more experimental branches of the grademy. He has continually sought out new musical settings over the decades from his collaborations with Moroccan musicians in the '70s to his electric free/funk Prime Time ensembloo in the '90s and a cleaner distilled band in the '00e

The roots of this broad musicality can be heard in these early recordings, which, in turn. are better understood by a look to Ornette's early days in Fort Worth, Texas. The largely self-taught Coleman fashioned the music contained on Reguty lea Raye Thing from cotton-

field hollers, street-corner quitar moans, Texas jump bands, and belop syncopations. By breaking down musical barriers. Ornette broke through to a lucid paignant and most important celebratory musical statement





VINX weaves tales like a great novelist through landscapes both exotic and familiar with The Storyteller, his third release from Sting's Pangaea label. Vinx's music has evolved through the addition of a traditional rhythm section to produce his most accessible blend of Jazz, Pop and World Music to date.



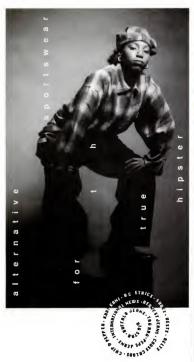




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#### COLOR ME BADD Time and Chance & Gigat

What will happen to all these posses of virile doo-hop dudes once they have "sexed,"
"freaked," and "licked up" the girlies of their wet dreams—in searing four-part
harmony, no less? Most will probably try to relive that special moment over and



over again, until they eventually turn into the '90s urban/pop equivalent of the Whispers or the Commodores, eternally serving refried leftovers on the chitlin'-Veras circuit.

But judging from Time and Chance, the crucial follow-up to Color Me Badd's triple-platinum 1991 debut, this quartet have enough

themselves to a higher ground. From the first strains of the opening ritle cut, it's clear that these boys are not playing around. Laid over a rugged, hypnotic slow ground, wowen with a pop-savy hand by producer DJ Pooh, the rightly harmonized refrain "Don't it hurt so bad" becomes a steamy and seductive mantra despite the spiritual rone of the verses (which were insoined, curiously enomely. In Ecclesianes 9:11).

The sensuous spell gets deeper with the darker, more primal "Groovy Now," another delicious collaboration with Pooh, and probably the most overtly carnal composition on the album. Barring the occasional declaration of romantic yearning, postcuiral activities and soothing the soul are the prevalent themes here.

The downside to Time and Chance is the occasional whiplash shifts in production tone, which magnify the artistic growth and confidence that CMB will need to develop to match their ambition. The album's fierce hip hop opening soon unfolds into a writery of artifulder, ranging from \$\subsect Store hip hop opening soon.

#### MIKIHOWARD

MMS Sings Billian A Yelouts to Billia Notiday o'Goard For divise disappearably exhibing a new Homer, reporting an album of standards has proven a surefler way to germar props in the preas and than pool pohats. Casas in politis Lady Sings the Blass proved to the world that Millian Sinas could ready sings (self-readable WIS) Lovey Jump-started Metallia Color nearly Gregatishic post—"Pilis Cadillace Coverage and The Breadway Album and Sack to Breadway put snephrol Barbers Strelsand back on ton of the Oskinsky put snephrol Barbers Strelsand back on ton of the Oskinsky put snephrol Barbers Strelsand back

Thus Mith However's latest disc, Milk! Sings Billier A Tribute to Billier Holiday, may be just what the manager ordered. What makes this record an artistic success and not just e gimnick or e conversation piece for her dishard fans is that instead of erooning like a pop-jazz glamor-puss, Mith-an old-school better at heart—lets loose with an atright big band.

On the upterspo numbers Tills "White a Little Montifeld Can Dr. on "Train! Nebody Silmess III Do," her jepful interpreteilines and selece-style spots and extended to the till the neocotate remoind us that IIII waven'l just a gardenia-advanted desparade who samp half-spood "till per and a good of the selection o

Although purists may ory "too much soul," Mills is commendably unarized to turn a familiar set of standards into a soul assenade. In fact, the sister sounds even more at home on this material (save the obscure and comy "I Want. To Be Varu teberra's Soun-is-Lun" (laber not be descent on her usual pap-passelly FAB repertables. Repairing, Aretha and Chaka—devicedy Mills's work of the particular of the partic

Stone-influenced funk energy ("Let Me Have It All") to gooey David Foster-helmed pop. Highlights include the richly textured R&B popper "Choose" (easily the best song Jam & Lewis have attached their names to in years) and "Trust Me," with its stirring, folkish qualities and lovely cello interfulse.

CMB still have a few miles to go before they are solid enough to rise above their styllistic surroundings. Bur Time and Chance holds promise that such a day may not be too far off. —Larry Flick





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#### ARTIST/ALBUM

Louie Rankin G☆WIZ LETHAL WEAPON NAUGHTY BITS MESA/BLUEMOON RECORDS 7751 The Jerky Boys 7764

THE IEDEV BOY SELECT STREET RECORDS 7757

Various Artists 7765

STRICTLY DANCE HALL **EPIC/COLUMBIA RECORDS** 7753 Iodeci

(AVAILABLE IN DEC.) UPTOWN RECORDS 7754 Intro

INTRO ATLANTIC/THE ATLANTIC GROUP 7755 VINX

THE STORYTELLER PANGAFA/IRS

7756 7669 FROM A BAD BLOCK MOTOWN RECORDS

7757 7770 Funkadelic ONE NATION UNDER A GROOVE DRIGRITY DECORDS

7758 Lisette Melendez 7771 GOODIE GOODIE

FEVER/RAL/CHAOS 7759 Jazzy Jeff & Fresh Prince CODE RED

IIVE RECORDS 7760 R. Kelly IIVE RECORDS

Blood of Abraham **FUTURE PROFITS** RUTHLESS/RELATIVITY RECORDS

C.O.D STRAIGHT FROM THE UNDERGROUND SELECT STREET DECORDS

7763

7766

7767

7768

7769

SCOTTI BROS. RECORDS

M.O.P. HOW ABOUT SOME HARDCORE SELECT STREET RECORDS

Various Artists PLANET RAP

TOMMY BOY RECORDS Father SEX IS LAW

UPTOWN RECORDS M C Lyte FIRST PRIORITY/THE ATLANTIC GROUP

Me'shell PLANTATION LULLABIES WARNER BROS. RECORDS

George Clinton HEY MAN SMELL MY FINGER

WARNER BROS, RECORDS MF-2-U

ME-2-U HIICH/DCA Das Efx

STRAIGHT UP SEWASIDE EASTWEST/ATLANTIC RECORDS SALT-N-PFPA

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#### THE DETAILS

#### Table of Contents, page 12

Cosmic black "Magical Mandala" top by Shanie Jacobs \$75, 212-877-1909. Black suede-textured trousers, available at Big Drop People Sportswear, 174 Spring St., NYC

#### Start: Beadmaster, page 36

Beads and medallions by Level Vibes Productions, 212-222-2872

#### Next: Maxwell, page 58

Maroon velvet suit by Paul Smith \$1,095, available at Paul Smith Boutique, 108 Fifth Ave., NYC. White cotton oxford by Emporio Armani \$110, available at Emporio Armani Boutique, Boston, NYC, San Francisco. White cotton T-shirt by Comme des Garçons Homme Plus by Rei Kawakubo, available at Comme des Garcons Boutique, NYC. Brown fur felt fedora by Lola Millinery \$195, available at Lola Millinery, 2 East 17th St., NYC.

#### Vibe Fashion: Janela, page 97

Cream angora cropped top, available at Salvation Army, 208 Eighth Ave., NYC.

#### Rachel and Robble, page 98 Red cropped tank top and floral lace-up bellbottoms, both available at Pow Wow, NYC.

Red-and-yellow striped maxi vest by Patricia Field, available at Patricia Field, 10 East 8th St., NYC. Black tights by The Gap. nationwide Harold, page 99

Yellow vinyl one-piece rainsuit by Harley-Davidson \$35, 800-443-2153, Gold with blue striped bomber cap by Split \$28, available at Urban Outfitters nationwide; Atomic Garage, Los Angeles, White cotton signature T-shirt by Denim Generation, available at Macy's nationwide.

#### Emmie, page 100

Green corduroy jacket with faux fur lining by Gypses and Thieves \$190, available at Na Na Shoes, 138 Prince St., NYC; The Thief Store, Los Angeles; The Drop Shop, Orlando. Cranberry-and-black quilted knit top by TRIPP \$26, available at Fred Segal, Los Angeles; Macy's Herald Square, NYC; TRIPP Boutique, 133 Thompson St., NYC. Red

plaid tennis skirt by Patricia Field \$68. available at Patticia Field, 10 East 8th St., NYC. Navy opaque tights by Hue \$9, available at better department and specialty stores nationwide. Red suede classic sneakers by Puma \$60, available at Na Na shoes, NYC.

#### Janela, page 102

Parchwork romper by Nikka \$60, available at Three Jills and a Jack, 430 East 9th St.,

#### Biagio, page 103 Green metallic Antron nylon ski suit by Two

Hype \$280, available at Champs nationwide. Silver Sprint Full-Face belmet by Harley-Davidson \$150,800-443-2153. Green shades. available at Screaming Mimi's, 22 East 4th St., NYC.

#### Rachel, page 105 Black leather-and-chrome horsey bit with

side blinders \$130, available at Body Worship, 112 East 7th St., NYC.

#### Janela, page 106

Black-and-white gingham dress by Betsey Johnson \$120, available at Bersey Johnson Boutique, 248 Columbus Ave., NYC. Beaded cardigan, available at Cheap Jack's Vintage Shop, 841 Broadway, NYC.

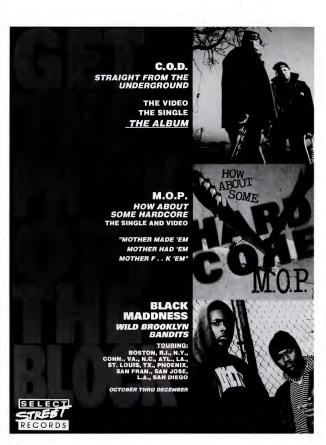
#### Louie Louie, page 107

Checked petry jacket by Fresh Jive \$75, available at Fred Segal, Los Angeles; Patricia Field, NYC; Fast Forward, Dallas. Blanket striped cotton/wool sweater by Matsuda \$490, available at Charivari, NYC: Matsuda Boutique, 156 Fifth Ave., NYC; Maxfield. Los Angeles. Striped zipper sweater by Gypses and Thieves \$70, available at Na Na Shoes, NYC: The Thief Store, Los Angeles; The Drop Shop, Orlando. Green corduros shorts by Jimmy'Z \$30, available at The Broadway, Los Angeles, Gray-and-blue socks by Dickies \$5.59, 1-800-DICKIES. Brown wool tweed puff cap by Split \$20, available at Urban Outfitters nationwide. Green cordurov speakers by Vans \$52, available at Foot Locker nationwide

#### Fou, page 109 White cotton T-shirt with tattoo-print

sleeves by John Richmond "Destroy" \$68, available at Untitle, NYC; Bill Holman, Atlanta. Stripe shorts by Jimmy'Z \$34, available at Pacific Sunwear, Los Angeles

first management (ISSN 1070-6701) is published moughly for our for combined December Hancing and Innerhalished respect by Time Inc. Ventures, Time & Life Buildings, Sockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020-1101 Robert L. Miller, Chairman & President; Barbara Kacayaski, Treasarer, Harry M. Johosma, Secretary. Second-Class postence pendence of New York, NY, and addstronal mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Vibmagazine, Box 59580, Boulder, CO 80323-7538. Regular subscription rate is \$18.00 per year. Fireign subscription exes are: Canada \$30.00; all other countries \$50.00 payable in advance in U.S. funda. GST# R125160309. Vol. 1, No. 4 Copyright © 1993 Time Ioc. Ventures. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be copied nr reproduced without permission from VIBS. Subscription requests, address changes and adjustments should be directed to Viss. Box 59580. BoxIder. CO 80121-7518 or call (800) 477-1974. Please neutral name and address clearly. Visit cannot be responsible for unsolicized materials. Visit is a trademark of Time Inc. Vencures



#### DONNY HATHAWAY LIVES

Oozing out of Dr. or o's "Lil" Ghetto Boy." Marking the deep alrowood Too Shorts "Too Ghetto." His "affenday We'll All Be Free" Ghetto." His "affenday We'll All Be Free" supliffing the firstee of Spike Lee's Matcolm X. Echeling through Luther Vandross, James Ingram, George Benson, and Jodeci. Donny, with honey, in his voice and heave in in his hands, has become an immeasurable influence on a new openation.

Because Dorny was for real. He only had a three-year solo career. He took his own life 15 years ago this January, at ago 3.0 MeV. The year solo career. He took his own life 15 years ago this January, at ago 3.0 MeV. The year year solo career he took his own life was that good year. The year year had a solo career he was the year year and year of year of year of year of year. The Ghetro' and Youser Inside Levy phing a Everything, "while his duets with Reborat Reick—"Where is the Jove," "The Cheef Oet to You"—showed his consummate commercial appeal. And for those who did his his prime-time TV fixture, signing the them for Maude.

"Donny was a genius," says Quincy Jones, who hired him for the Come Back Charleston Blue so undtrack. "He understood the 360 degrees of black music and, like Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, and some of the other pioneers, he had a clear understanding of what his roots were about."

Those musical roots came from his St. Louis home. "Donny had a lot of church in in him, alot of soul," remembers Curtis Mayried, for whom Donny was house arranger and musical director in the late 'sos. "You could hear hear it whenever he expressed himsel—that nice little grow. Plas he had intellect. He studed very hard. Bill the composers, everyone no from Bacharach to Tchalkovsky, He knew what those people could do."

That knowledge led Dorny to produce and arrange for soul legend Jerry Butler and for the young Earth, Wind & Fire, He played keyboards on many of Aretha Franklin's '70s hits. 'The only other musical person who inspired me the same way was Miles Davis," says drummer Fred White, who played on Donny's '72 live album and later for his own brother Maurice in EWr. "He could play hings nobody knew he could play, like straight-ahead jazz. He was urilimite."

Over the years, unbridled possibility became as much a part of Donny's legacy as his sultry voice and singular musicianship. 'Idid a show in St. Louis with Donny opening and people booed him off, 'recalls Sutter,' 'I came onand told the audience, 'You have just booed a genius. You will regret this.' 'At 19il Clinton's insuguration, a woman came up to me and sald. 'I was at that show. I promised myself that if I ever met you, I would remind you of what you said.' 'What he said was before its time. I

Harry Weinger is director of A&R for PolyGram catalogue development. He won a Best Album Notes Grammy for James Brown's Star Time.





